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CLARA CAMERON;

THE

BELLE OF THE SEASON.

"She was a form of life and light,
That seen, became a part of sight,
And rose, where e'er I turned mine eye,
The morning Star of Memory."—THE GIAOUR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CLARA CAMERON.

CHAPTER I.

"Finor beltà maggiore
Mai non formar gli Dei,
E il minor pregio in lei
E'il pregio di beltà."

METASTASIO.

THE clock of St. George's, Hanover-square, was striking ten, as an old fashioned chariot drove up to one of the most splendid mansions in Grosvenor-square. The door speedily opened, and the long train of gorgeously-dressed servants, would not so soon or so obsequiously, have attended to an arrival of such apparently little consequence,

had they not known that the antiquated equipage contained the niece of their lord, that the rooms prepared for her reception were decorated as for an equal, not a dependent, and that their lady was herself waiting to receive the expected stranger, who was to make her home with them, before she proceeded to a ball at Buckingham Palace.

Thus, though attended by only a maid servant, Miss Cameron was received by the groom of the chambers, with one of his most recherché bows, and ushered through a noble hall, and up a marble staircase, into the presence of the Countess of St. Clair.

Clara Cameron, after travelling long since day-light had departed, and shut up in comparative darkness, almost closed her dazzled eyes at the glare of light which burst upon her. Lady St. Clair was seated at her harp, and, as she arose to welcome her unknown niece, Clara thought she had never before seen such consummate love-

liness. At first, there was a shade of constraint over her polished manners, as she extended her hand to receive her stranger-guest, but, as the full light of an argand lamp fell on her face and disclosed its lines of classic beauty, joined to an inimitable grace of figure and air, in an instant that constraint vanished, and Lady St. Clair cordially embraced the orphan girl who was now placed under her care.

"A thousand welcomes to you, my sweet niece," said the kind voice of the Countess; "I am delighted to see you, and as you are. For a moment, that great black bonnet cast such a shade over your face, I really fancied some gaunt spectre of Scotch antiquity was come to domicile beneath my roof—but that lamp has removed all my fears,—yes, and as you laughingly throw off that odious head gear, I see you are all I could wish you." And again she kissed Clara's smooth, white forehead.

The practised eye of the Countess per-

ceived in a moment that Clara's was a beauty of no common order, and at the same time was one which would never interfere with her own. The contrast in their dress was as striking as the different style of their beauty—the one attired in courtly splendour to attend a ball given by Royalty—the other in deep mourning, and even that disarranged by a long and fatiguing journey,—the one a clear and brilliant blonde,—the other a pale and dark brunette. Clara gazed on the young Countess as a figure in some fairy scene, and the splendour of all around might well favour the illusion.

The room in which they stood, was one of the most beautiful, even in that mass of splendour—London. The walls were hung with rich crimson damask, and the curtains of the same material, were lightened in their glow by mazy folds of white figured gauze, edged with silver fringe, and the intermediate spaces between the windows, filled with pier glasses, which now,

with the aid of lights placed before them, seemed to multiply the brilliant scene.

The walls were enlivened by some beautiful specimens of the old masters. The only modern picture was a full-length portrait of Lady St. Clair, in the act of tuning her harp, thus giving full display for all the beauties of her faultless figure. The rest of the furniture was in keeping with the magnificence already described. A carpet of roses and lilies, the texture of which looked like velvet. Sofas and fauteuils of the most elegant forms, courted to rest and repose, and richly inlaid tables, with vases of the freshest and sweetest flowers, completed the recherché decorations of the room.

But Clara's eye did not rest long on all this splendour, but rather turned to the fair inhabitant of so fair a shrine, and found her indeed well worthy of it.

The Countess of St. Clair was rather above the middle height, and cast in the exactest mould of symmetry, which was set off

to the best advantage by the style of her dress, and its perfect adaptation to her figure. Nature was not there marred by art, as is frequently the case, for no fashion was adopted which did not suit the wearer; consequently, she was always cited as the best-dressed woman in London. Her costume was now simple, though rich and suited to the royal party she was about to attend.

A dress of white satin was confined with a zone of brilliants round her slender waist; a bandeau of the same costly jewels confined her waving ringlets, and sparkled over a brow of lily whiteness, while diamonds of immense value clasped the silver embroidered slippers, which might have matched in size with Cinderella's. This was a costly fancy of the young Countess's, and one which few, except the fairy foot of the highest lady in the land, had symmetry enough to follow with any advantage to the wearer. Lady St. Clair's eyes were singularly blue, and of so clear and bright a colour, as, without a poet's

license, really to match the sunny hue of an Italian sky. As she now turned them, beaming with affection on Clara, they were perfectly devoid of that *fierté* which sometimes marred their expression.

Passing her arm through that of her guest, she smilingly offered to be the mistress of the ceremonies, to guide her to the apartments prepared for her. Crossing a corridor at the top of the stairs, she pointed to a door which opened, as she said, on her own especial domain, and where she should always be happy to see Clara when she pleased; and then, entering a room which was immediately opposite, she begged to introduce Clara into her own private retreat, and where she promised not to intrude without permission. This elegant boudoir was fitted up with all the comforts and luxuries of modern refinement, and through it was an entrance to the bedroom.

"Now here, my dear Clara, I must leave you for to-night. My carriage was

ordered to be ready as soon as you arrived; but I was determined to wait and welcome you myself on your first introduction to your new home, for *home* I hope you will find it in every sense of the word. And now, dear, let me advise you to have some coffee, and go to bed directly; I shall want you to be quite rested by to-morrow, when you shall begin your campaign with the Opera. I assure you I anticipate much pleasure from introducing so fair a specimen of St. Clair beauty. I can trace a strong family likeness to my liege lord, albeit he is none of the youngest now, but there are remains of the singularly handsome man which I am told he was when young, and I can see the same style of feature softened in you into feminine loveliness. Nay, never blush, dear Clara, I speak but the simple truth, and, if you never discovered it before, you soon will do so here, I assure you."

At this moment my lady's maid, or as she

was rather pleased to be called, my lady's *lady*, opened the door, with a crimson velvet cloak, lined with ermine to protect the delicate form of her mistress from the night air.

"Oh, Violette, how can I put that heavy thing on this warm night; do bring me something cooler," said the laughing Countess, as she pushed the splendid cloak from her.

"Indeed, my Lady, it was my Lord's own orders to me, before he went out this evening, that I should be sure to wrap your Ladyship up warm to-night, as he had heard your Ladyship cough several times to-day."

"Well, then, I submit; but see, Clara, how overpowering is the kindness of a good husband, on such a summer night"—and she playfully bent beneath the weight of her wrappings. I shall meet Lord St. Clair at the Palace to-night, and I shall not fail to tell him, the first thing, what a dear little niece awaits his benediction to-morrow. Don't hurry yourself in the morning, but

order breakfast when you please in your own boudoir. Lord St. Clair is too early for any but his poodle to breakfast with him, and I am as much too late. And now, my dear, good night. I make no apologies for leaving you, as it is high time for that pale cheek to be regaining its bloom in sleep. Violette, see that Miss Cameron's maid wants nothing for her own or her mistress's use; and desire Deville to send up some coffee, with something rather more substantial than his wafer bread and butter, as it is for a traveller, who has probably had but a spare and early dinner. And now, dear Clara, again good-night," and, gracefully kissing her hand as she closed the door, our heroine was left alone.

She threw herself on a sofa, and her first impulse was to burst into tears, as the contrast to the simple though elegant home of her childhood, and her present abode, struck upon her feelings; but she checked the rising train of thought, and, without recurring

to the past, was determined to enjoy the present, and to be thankful for the cordial welcome she had received.

There were marks of Lady St. Clair's considerate kindness in all the comforts of this cheerful room allotted to her use; and when her books had arrived, to fill the empty shelves prepared for them, and her own favourite harp, she thought she should soon feel quite at home, and only hoped her uncle might prove as very loveable a person as his charming wife.

In a few minutes, her faithful Janet entered, followed by a page with a tray of the choicest refreshments, to tempt her appetite. As the door closed after him, Janet exclaimed, in her usual broad Scotch dialect, "Hegh, Miss Clara, what a palace this is we have come to, why Mrs. Allen's, the housekeeper's room, is furnished like any parlour, and then, Miss Violette, my lady's own maid, is dressed just like a lady, with artificials in her cap, and a black satin apron, embroidered all round with flowers."

Clara smiled at the simplicity of her old Scotch maid, and said she hoped they should both be very happy there.

"Hegh, dear Miss, that I am sure we shall. Mr. Deville has sent me some cold fowl and ham into the housekeeper's room, and with your leave I will just go down and eat some, and then come up and help you to bed. Lady St. Clair has been so thoughtful as to have a door opened out of your bed-room into mine, which joins it, that I might always be at hand when you wanted me."

"That will indeed be comfortable for us both, Janet; and now hasten to your supper, for I shall be glad to rest my aching head."

CHAPTER II.

"All' apperir della beltà novella,
Nasce un bisbiglio, e 'l guardo og'nun v'intende;
Siccome la dove cometa o stella
Non pieè irsta di giorno, in ciel resplende."
TASSO—Canto iv.

CLARA did not awake the next morning till Janet stood at her bed-side, with a message from her uncle, desiring to know if it was too early for her to join his breakfast.

"What is o'clock?" she hastily exclaimed, starting up.

"It is only just nine," replied her maid, "and my lady never breakfasts before twelve, but my lord is punctual to nine. You cannot be dressed in time now."

Clara assented to the truth of this, as she had no fairy to deck her forth with a touch of her wand; she, therefore, contented herself with sending a message full of regrets to her uncle at not being ready, and bade Janet hasten her toilet as much as possible, that she might join her uncle before he had left the breakfast room.

The excitement of this little bustle gave a deeper glow to her cheek; and, joined to the embarrassment of a first meeting with so near a relation, the only brother, too, of her beloved mother, Clara never looked more beautiful than when she entered her uncle's breakfast-room. He was sitting alone, except a fine black poodle of the true and genuine breed, which stood resting its large shaggy head on its master's knee. A slight growl was uttered as Clara entered, and, taken by surprise, she retreated a few steps.

"Don't be frightened, child—don't be frightened," was the almost angry reception

of her uncle, who could brook nothing approaching towards distaste shown to his favourite Banquo; and, while he patted his head with one hand, he held out the other to his niece.

As she approached nearer, all the coldness of his manner vanished, and he pressed a fatherly kiss on her cheek, wet with tears, as he called her the image of his dear sister; "and yet, my love, you are not really like Adelaide," said he, gazing on her charming features, for smiles had now taken the place of tears, "but there is an extraordinary family likeness, though I must own my own poor sister was never so beautiful as you are. Those dark eyes and hair you inherit from your father. Ah! well do I remember him —the handsomest man of his day."

As Lord St. Clair affectionately retained his niece's hand, Banquo also came to greet her with kindness corresponding to that shown by his master, which Clara returned by giving him her other hand to meet his

mute caress. She could have done nothing more conciliating to the tastes of the Earl; and, if Banquo had been of a jealous disposition, he might have foreseen a rival in his master's affections.

"I am glad to see you like dogs, Clara. Your mother, too, always was fond of them —I believe it is a family taste. I remember giving her a beautiful Spaniel of King Charles's breed, just about the time you were born."

Clara recollected it too, and spoke of dear Fido as the constant playfellow of her childhood, and in terms of fondness sufficiently warm to satisfy even Lord St. Clair's extreme partiality for dogs, which sometimes he carried to such an extreme, as almost to amount to a mania.

"Well, my love, I am glad you liked it, I will try if I cannot get you another," and his lordship entered into a long discussion on the subject. After which he dismissed Clara to her own apartments, tell-

ing her he had finished his breakfast long since, and she had better go and ring for hers now, but that he should always be glad of her company to join him any morning at nine o'clock that she liked.

As he rose with punctilious politeness to open the door for her exit, Clara could not but admire the remains of manly beauty, which Lady St. Clair had told her he possessed; and his upright figure, and active manner made him look younger than he really was, joined to that indescribable elegance of manner which is a sure criterion of high birth.

Our heroine had scarcely completed her solitary meal, to her always the most disagreeable part of being alone, when Lady St. Clair's maid entered with a message from her lady, to request Miss Cameron's company in her ladyship's dressing-room. She found her aunt in very different looks to those of the night before. Still she was beautiful; but, though only twenty-eight,

she would now almost be called passée, so comparatively pale was the glow of her cheek, and dim the lustre of her eye. She held out her hand kindly to Clara, but with less *empressement* than she had done the preceding evening. Her tones also had more of lassitude as she said, "I had a delightful party last night, but it broke up early, and I am proportionately tired this morning; you can't think how going to bed before three o'clock tires me; you may laugh, but it is so. Well now let us fix our plans for to-day. This is Opera night, and after that a party at Lady Belton's. I have asked some men to dinner to go with us to the Opera, but before then we must modernize your dress a little. Madame —— will make you fit to be seen by seven o'clock. We will have the carriage now, and go there directly. I will have the vis-a-vis, and then you can go that short distance without the odious bonnet which frightened me so last night. We can

soon choose one more becoming, I think; and when this momentous affair of dress is over, for momentous I do assure you it is, we can take a drive in the park after luncheon."

We will pass over the discussions which ensued at Madame * * * on the merits of white satin and white crape, &c., &c., and bring our heroine into Lady St. Clair's drawing-room at seven o'clock, dressed even to please the French taste of Mademoiselle Violette, and, to use her expression, looking "tout à fait charmante."

The Countess was seated on a chaise lounge, talking earnestly with a tall fashionable-looking man, handsome, but having decidedly the look of a *roué*. She smiled one of her brilliant smiles as Clara approached (and she could scarcely believe her to be the same person she had seen in the morning), and taking her hand with inimitable grace said, "Let me introduce Lord St. Clair's niece, Miss Cameron, to you Mr. Caven-

dish. Miss Cameron, Mr. Ernest Cavendish. Clara, I ought to tell you that much of your success in the fashionable world depends upon Mr. Cavendish's judgment first passed upon you; therefore, smile sweetly upon him and secure a favourable opinion."

We pass over the silly compliments, and empty trifling which followed, when a knock proclaimed another visitor, and Captain Macdonald was announced. Her Ladyship held out her hand on his approach, and Lord St. Clair gave him a friendly and cordial welcome. The usual forms of introduction being gone through with Miss Cameron, the two young men acknowledged each other by rather a distant bend of the head.

Captain Macdonald, though equally tall with Mr. Cavendish, looked less strikingly so from being more slightly made; and altogether a more youthful figure, if the term may be applied to a Captain in the Guards. There was less of show and glare

in his appearance and manners, but he was more elegant, and if not equally fashionable, was yet more *distingué* in his appearance, if the readers of these pages understand the difference wished to be drawn. There was a manly openness and grace in his manners which made him an universal favourite, joined to an extremely pleasing countenance, if not what could be termed really handsome, but possessing that indescribable style of feature which plainly told he was of the highest aristocratic birth. His high and open forehead was shaded by waving hair of a light brown, and his gentle blue eyes might have given him almost an air of effeminacy, had not the whole contour of his countenance borne the impress of manly dignity.

Mr. Cavendish bestowed his attentions almost exclusively on Lady St. Clair, taking little notice of what was going on generally. Thus, Captain Macdonald was thrown much with Clara; and their conversation con-

tinued so uninterruptedly, that, imperceptibly, the constraint of a first acquaintance wore away; and, in a few hours, they approached nearer to the friendliness of intimacy than generally takes place in so short a time.

The gentlemen soon joined the ladies in the drawing-room; and Lord St. Clair, with some political friends, declined going to the Opera, having affairs of State to talk over, though Lord St. Clair thought he might perhaps come in at a late hour. Lady St. Clair wished to be early this evening that Clara might lose none of the beautiful music; and, taking the arm of Ernest Cavendish, she left Clara to the care of Captain Macdonald, as they proceeded to the carriage, which was then announced.

Those who can remember the first time of going to the Opera, may imagine Clara's feelings on entering the brilliant scene. Placed in one of the most conspicuous boxes, and seated with one so well known,

and so much admired, as Lady St. Clair, she soon saw all eyes directed to her; and, unaccustomed to the bold stare of fashionable admiration, she blushed as she retreated rather behind the curtains of the box in which she sat. The dark penetrating eyes of Ernest Cavendish now met hers for the first time; and with an earnest gaze, from which she almost shrank, he gallantly said, "You see, Miss Cameron, how much you have to dread from what Lady St. Clair told you of the dread fiat of my voice. If I mistake not, and my eyes are pretty well skilled in these matters now, your doom is sealed by the general opinion of this crowded house. What say you, Lady St. Clair, is it not so?"

Something like a cloud passed for a moment over the brow of the young Countess, but the bitterness of jealousy, at least for the frivolous and vacillating admiration of the crowd around her, soon passed away; and, with her own open expression of countenance,

she laughingly said, "Yes, Clara, I am doomed to have a rival, I see; but I will be a generous one, and neither stab nor poison you, according to the established usage of heroines of old;" and whispering in her ear, "only marry you; but, le beau et fier Capitaine, que dira-t'il? I am glad to see, Clara, you are no enemy to flirtation; keep it within proper bounds, and depend upon it, there is no amusement to equal it." This little aside called fresh blushes into Clara's cheeks, and perhaps "le beau Capitaine" might have been flattered had he known the cause, though his was not the heart to be chosen for a mere flirtation to pass away a languid hour; it was far too open, too generous, and too sincere.

CHAPTER III.

"Sparger così d' oblio,
L'ardor, che un' alma ha per gran tempo accesa,
E'difficile, è dura, è lunga impresa."

METASTASIO.

IT is not necessary to follow Clara's steps through all the gay scenes of a London season. The first *debût* at the Opera was but a prelude to the admiration which constantly attended her.

Nobly born, and introduced by a woman of Lady St. Clair's decided fashion, she, doubtless, owed much to the circumstances in which she was placed; and, when her transcendent beauty and winning manners were added to these advantages, no wonder

that she became the reigning *belle* of the season. No party was thought complete without Lady St. Clair and her lovely niece. Even Royalty deigned to greet her with unwonted favour; and, at the first drawing-room she attended, the sweet smile of youthful Majesty, joined to a voice of melody, condescendingly hoped she would always, for the future, attend her parties with Lady St. Clair.

And how did this idol of the day bear the homage paid to her? Did the country novice shrink abashed from the admiration which followed her, or did she grow haughty and overbearing in her manners? Neither of these extremes marred her success; she passed on with unaltered mien; and Lady St. Clair often wondered at the quiet self-possession of a young and inexperienced girl in scenes which would have turned the heads of half her cotemporaries.

It was a glowing July day towards the close of the London season, when Lady St.

Clair, opening the door of Clara's boudoir, begged permission to come and bestow her weariness on her; "besides, dearest, I think yours is the coolest room in the house, or this light chintz furniture, lined with green, makes it look so. I wish green was not so wretchedly unbecoming to me, or I would have it in my own dressing-room. Now, just see the reflection of that curtain on my face—what a hag it makes me look; but never mind, as we are alone, it is very refreshing to the eyes, and perhaps will make them brighter at my ball to-night, which I think will be the best, as it is the last of the season.

> " 'The *last*—oh in that little word
> How many thoughts are stirred
> Which echo of the past?'

"I feel in a very lackadaisical mood, methinks, this morning. Now as I lie on this comfortable sofa, do take your harp again, and sing me a song of hopeless love, or bet-

ter still, tell me the tale of your own past life: there must have been love in it, I am sure, or you could not be thus unmoved at the many hearts laid at your feet."

For a moment, Clara's face was crimson, and then turning as suddenly pale, she burst into tears. The before languid countess sprang from her reclining posture, and, clasping her arms round her, with every fond name, begged she would pardon the so unthinkingly wounding her feelings.

Clara now passed her hand across her brow, and seemed in painful thought, then returning Lady St. Clair's affectionate embrace, she begged her not to notice her emotion, but to return to the sofa again, and she would tell her the short history of the past.

"No, dearest, I will not be so selfish, much as I am interested in all that concerns you, I would not thus agitate you for worlds."

"Indeed, indeed," said the now composed

girl, "I had rather tell you all now, without a moment's delay, else a subject will press upon my mind, to which I never willingly allow an entrance. Your affection fully merits all my confidence—there, rest your dear cheek upon this cushion again, and I will tell you in a few words my tale of love. You will then no longer wonder at the apathy you call so strange.

"You know my father died while I was a mere child, and my mother lived in complete retirement, devoting herself entirely to my education. The little Scotch village in which we lived consisted entirely of cottages, except our house and the vicarage. My earliest recollections are mingled with the kindness of the dear old vicar and his wife, who, with no children of their own, made me their pet and plaything. Mr. Neville was a man of high talent, and generally engrossed in his intellectual pursuits, except when he condescended to stoop from them to be first, the instructor of my childhood, and then, of my

maturer years. I yet look back to the happy and tranquil hours spent in his study, with almost regret that the girl has grown into the woman. He had the art of always making his instructions agreeable, perhaps, because he himself took pleasure in the task.

"My mother was eminently fitted to make my education complete in every feminine accomplishment, but, that two and two make four, that London is the capital of England, and such like learning, I am much indebted to the patience of this dear old man.

"But I wander from the point like a coward. Well then, when I was just seventeen, an old college friend of Mr. Neville's requested him to receive his son into his quiet home during the summer months, and assist him to read for orders, after which he was to take possession of a family living. Mr. Neville was not in the habit of taking pupils, but he could not refuse his old friend. I could tell you the day, the hour, the very

chair on which I was sitting in the Vicarage when William Fitzgerald first arrived there. He was then just two-and-twenty—that I thought him handsome *then*, when I had seen no others, is not to be wondered at—but I should think him pre-eminently so *now* among the noblest of the land. But let that pass. My mother was pleased with him; on both his father's and mother's side his family was of an ancient Milesian descent, and she said he bore the impress of nobility on his forehead, which was the first passport to her favour. We were necessarily thrown much together, and I need not tell you the result. The still retirement of those deeply-wooded dells, the wild scenery of our beautiful lake, all tended to engender and foster love. But I must not dwell on those scenes, or my heart will burst.

"My mother made no objection to his comparatively small fortune; he was a gentleman by birth and education, and this satisfied her St. Clair pride. At the end of the

summer, we parted as betrothed lovers, and, when he had taken orders, and made his house in Devonshire fit for my reception, he was to return, and claim me as as his bride.

"A month after his departure, I received a most incoherent letter, bidding me prepare for dreadful tidings—that by his own folly he had blasted his happiness for ever. A few days of agonizing suspense passed on, and then another letter came, telling me he was the husband of another. By some dire fatality, he had gone with a college friend to one of the London gaming-honses. He was tempted to risk a few hundreds for a cause he did not blush for, but I need not now be told; he lost this first stake—and again he tried. Before he was aware, hundreds became thousands, and he rose from that fatal table a loser of every farthing he possessed in the world—even the living which he had looked to as our future home. Disgrace and ruin were now irremediable, and, worse than all, his parents must share them with

him. He said he felt his brain almost giving way, when an old man, plainly dressed, who had been looking on all the while, whispered in his ear, 'Give me your word of honour to comply with what I ask, and I will immediately settle these demands.' He felt he had no alternative, and he pledged his word. In a moment, the stranger gave his draft for the immense sum he had lost—and, passing his arm through his, led him out of this justly called, 'Hell.'

"As they walked up St. James's-street, the stranger said 'I know you well, Mr. Fitzgerald, I knew you as a boy, and yours is not a face to forget. I was a shop-boy in the parish in which your father lives; I came to town, and, thanks to my own prudence, mixed with some good luck, I am now one of the richest tradesmen in the city. What I have now paid for you is but a trifle to me—but I am ambitious—I am as rich as I can desire, but I am not what

the world styles a *gentleman*. I have an only daughter, I have given her the education of a princess, but yet she is only a tradesman's daughter. My desire is that you marry this daughter. With *your* name and *my* money, she will then be equal to any in the land; and thus, too, the shopkeeper may be lost in the father of Mrs. Fitzgerald.'

"You may suppose the agony these words gave to his listener, but there was no escape from his promise. Under the circumstances, he thought it best to hurry on the marriage as quickly as possible, and when this letter reached me, they were on their way to the continent. He said he could not live in the same country with me, he bade me forget that such a miserable wretch existed as himself, he bade me forget him and be happy. The whole ended with the solemn assurance that he would never cross my path, that he would study under all circumstances never to cast a blight around me by his presence.

"It is now two years since I received this

letter, and I have never heard his name mentioned since. We are never likely to meet again—he may hear where I am, though I cannot hear of him, and I trust to his honour to avoid me. This then is the outline of my love—of my feelings I can give no description. I thank God, I retained my reason under all the agony I endured, and *silently* endured, for I was too proud to let even my mother see how my heart writhed under the death-blow of its fondest hopes.

"Perhaps one sorrow swallows up another; and the illness of my dear mother soon engrossed my thoughts. At her death, you know, I resided with kind Mr. and Mrs. Neville, till I was received by the best and dearest of aunts. What my spirits have been since then, you best can tell; but I hope such that none could guess the truth, or suspect that among the gayest of the gay, I am not the happiest of the happy.

"And now let us never talk of this

subject again. I am determined not to be unhappy.'

"'Even the name I have worshipp'd in vain,
Shall awake not the sigh of remembrance again—
To bear, is to conquer our fate.'

"Another page of life is now open before me; the romantic I have closed for ever; but that of amusement, of gaiety, of ambition—and I believe I must add a little lurking corner for flirtation—is still open to me. Your affection, and that of my kind uncle, leave me nothing to wish for in a home; and surely I should be ungrateful to you both, if there were not often, hours, and days, when I do really forget the past, and enjoy the pleasures which are scattered on my path. My ideas of life are deeply changed, and I should almost say that, in me, the enthusiastic girl has become at once the cold-hearted woman.

"But yet I fear my cure is not quite

complete, for I dare not *probe* the wound. It is only by banishing past scenes and bye-gone feelings in the whirl of constant amusement or occupation, that I can retain composure. But habit is called second nature, and I hope soon really to become the light-hearted and cold-hearted girl I appear. And now let us talk of the ball to-night. What dress do you advise me to wear ? "

"My dear, dear Clara," said Lady St. Clair, with tears of sympathy in her eyes, "I cannot, I will not, attempt to tell you what I feel. I will only assure you of my fondest love and *admiration* of the heroism of your conduct, for it deserves no lighter name.

"How few girls would have the courage and good sense to act as you have done, but, with a morbid and mistaken sensibility, would have turned from *all* sources of happiness because *one* had failed! It may be *that one* is the most natural, the most fitting

to the youthful heart, but that there are others, my own experience can testify—*sad* experience I will not call it; for most ungrateful should I be for the many blessings of my lot, and the invariable kindness and attention of Lord St. Clair, did I deem myself now, or at any past period, unhappy. Still, you must be aware, from the disparity of our ages, I did not, I could not, have married for *love*. This is the first time I have said as much to mortal ear; but, dearest, your confidence claims mine, though I have nothing to tell, but what you know, or must have guessed. Yet there is confidence in talking thus unreservedly of the feelings of my heart, or perhaps I should more justly say, its want of feeling; and it is an additional drop, and a cordial one, too, in my cup of blessings, that in you I can find a friend so every way congenial in sentiments, and I may say pursuits. For, while you struggle to overpower a strongly-rooted love, I

struggle to prevent any of its latent seeds from springing up. Thank God! I have hitherto succeeded, and though I cannot but be aware I am capable of a far different attachment to that which I bear my husband, none ever has, and I trust to my principles of right, none ever will, arise in my heart.

"It was my mother's ambition for her daughters to marry well; and, when she saw one a Duchess, and another wedded to a foreign Prince, she was only too glad when Lord St. Clair offered to make me, from the school-room, a Countess, and a rich one, too, without waiting the risk of seeing whether time would throw up in the matrimonial lottery, a younger and equally eligible prize. I was too young and inexperienced to be otherwise than willing—I do not think I went so far as to be glad—to exchange the tutelage and constraint of a governess for the freedom of a married woman, with one of the finest establishments

in England. I then thought little of the husband, but I now know how highly he deserves my esteem.

"Depend upon it, let the inexperienced and sentimental girls of seventeen say what they will in favour of 'love and a cottage,' it would soon be desperately dull work, and there are many substantial and lasting enjoyments to be found in the luxuries of a large income and a high station in society. So, dearest Clara, we will cast love from our thoughts, and see if we cannot be happy—at all events, amused and contented, without the mischief-loving urchin.

"Now, as you propose, let us turn the subject to the more bright and shining one of our dresses this evening; for bright and shining I intend them to be. You admired the gold-embroidered gauze which I ordered for myself. I desired Madame * * * to make one exactly similar, only with silver instead of gold, to fit your sylph-like little

form and I have procured from Howell and James a silver wreath of vine-leaves and grapes to weave round your raven hair, which will not only be very becoming, but, I flatter myself in very good taste to correspond with the embroidery of the same pattern that ornaments the dress.

"Nay, nay, dearest, say not a word against my giving you these things. I wish you to look particularly well to-night, when so much royalty is to grace our rooms; and, as I like a little surprise myself, I did not tell you.

"Ah! just at the right moment here comes Violette with our dresses. Let us see that they are right."

CHAPTER IV.

"There was a sound of revelry by night,
The lamps shone o'er fair beauty and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell."

CHILDE HAROLD. Canto iii.

"WHO are those two tall fair girls, so elegant in appearance and dress, that are now speaking to my aunt?" asked Clara of Ernest Cavendish, who had been her partner in the waltz, and was just leading her to a seat. "I remember observing them at Almack's on Wednesday, but I never saw them at any of my aunt's parties before, I think."

"No, they are only just come to town, but they move in the very best society, and I have no doubt it is their absence only which has prevented Lady St. Clair sending them cards before for her balls. They are very much admired,—the younger, the taller of the two, only came out the last season and certainly is lovely."

"Oh, very, very!" exclaimed Clara eagerly, "I must go and get my aunt to introduce me; but you have not told me who they are, Mr. Cavendish."

Ladies Charlotte and Georgiana Selby, the only unmarried daughters of Lord Stoneley—that is he now taking them under his own protection. He looks more like their elder brother than their father, does he not?—but he is a very lynx in watching them—they might as well have a Spanish duenna at once as guardian;—and I don't think they want it either; they are desperately fastidious in their acquaintance."

As he spoke, their father brought them to a sofa adjoining the chair on which Clara sate, and over the back of which Ernest Cavendish was leaning. "Can you introduce me?" she said, her large dark eyes turning towards him with the animation they always possessed, when her enthusiastic mind had any favourite project in view.

"No," he replied, "I am not among their acquaintance. I believe Lord Stoneley thinks I should contaminate his daughters. But he need not fear: they are too cold for my taste, though I own them beautiful. Now shall I lead you to the Countess? I must claim her hand for the next waltz."

Clara took his offered arm, and with some difficulty made her way through the crowded suite of apartments to seek the mistress of the mansion. On their way, they met Captain Macdonald, who, with more of *empressement* than usual in his manner, said, "Have you seen Lord Stoneley and his daughters?"

"Yes," was the laconic reply of Mr. Cavendish, "they are in the music-room." But this was enough for "le beau et fier Capitaine," as he was generally called by Lady St. Clair, and he hastily passed on.

"Macdonald seems in a hurry," said Clara's companion, sarcastically. "I thought his heart was touched elsewhere, or I should have supposed him enamoured of one of these fair Graces, as before the second sister was married, they were generally called."

Clara blushed an appropriation to his words, and vexed with herself, and she knew not why with all around her, she forgot her intended request for an introduction when she joined Lady St. Clair.

"Oh!" you are come at last, you little runaway," said the Countess, as Clara approached; "I began to think Mr. Cavendish had run off with you. Clara did not hear his whispered reply into the ears of her aunt, but she observed the slight blush which tinged the cheek of one who was too

much a woman of the world often to display any change of countenance, and had generally overcome this youthful betrayal of feeling. Clara perceived this with regret, for she now knew sufficiently the manners of the world not to be fully aware that Ernest Cavendish was too pointed in his attentions to the young and beautiful Lady St. Clair, and with the character of libertinism which he bore, this in time might be injurious to the fair fame of one, who at present was unassailed by slander. Were this ever to become the case, she trembled at what the consequences might be on the irascible temper of Lord St. Clair, who, like a lion slumbering in his den, would only be the more enraged, if awoke unexpectedly from his repose by a voice to which he was keenly susceptible, the voice of public censure.

Clara was almost lost in a reverie to which these thoughts gave rise, when she was awoke from her trance, by the gentle but manly tones of Captain Macdonald.

"Miss Cameron, I have a request to make to you, will you grant it?" There was an unusual tremor in his voice as he added, "Lady Georgiana Selby requests the pleasure of being introduced to you. But my dear Miss Cameron—my dear friend—for such I have long considered you—I have first a confidence to repose in you, which should much sooner have been done, but till yesterday I did not feel at liberty to do so, having only then obtained Lord Stoneley's consent to our marriage. You will now guess what I wish to say, that Georgiana and myself have been long attached, but the impossibility of our soon being able to marry has prevented any engagement till very lately, when, at length, we have obtained Lord Stoneley's consent. You cannot suppose you have been unmentioned in my letters, you, whose charming society has passed over so many otherwise wearisome hours, and she longs to become acquainted with the lovely friend, who she

knows is dear to me as a sister could be—I am sure you will love each other."

For a moment, a feeling of mortified vanity crossed Clara's mind that another had been preferred to her, but the shade soon passed away, and her natural generosity of heart, rejoiced that one she admired so much had, before he knew her, placed his affections on one so apparently worthy of them, and who had young and warm affections to give in return.

She unhesitatingly took Captain Macdonald's arm, and they found the two sisters in the adjoining room, both apparently engaged in looking over some prints which lay on a table, but the soft blue eyes of Lady Georgiana were wandering to the door through which she entered with Captain Macdonald, and a conscious suffusion stole over her face as she saw them.

But few moments passed in the introduction, and unconsciously on each side, their hands had met in friendly greeting, instead

of the usual courtesy of a first introduction. Fortunately, there were no curious eyes watching this infringement of general rules; the elder sister smiled kindly as she observed it, and in a few minutes broke the embarassment which existed in the few desultory remarks made by each, by reminding Captain Macdonald he was engaged to dance that quadrille with her, and taking his arm, left her sister and Clara tête-à-tête, for which there are few places better adapted than a crowded party.

Insensibly the first air of constraint wore off, and, before Lady Charlotte and her partner rejoined them, they were immersed in a delightful and friendly conversation. The fine countenance of Frederick Macdonald brightened as he saw this, but, before any remark could be made by any of the party, they were joined by Lady St. Clair, who observed nothing particular in seeing them together, and, with one of her flattering smiles exclaimed, "Oh! I am glad some

one has undertaken the kind office of
ducing my niece to the Ladies Selby.
seeking to gain her that pleasure. B
I wanted to say that Lord Stonel
engaged to join our party at St. Clai
for the Kingsland races. Will you als
one, Captain Macdonald?"

Of course, he was only too happy
cept an invitation so every way agr
and the blushes of Lady Georgiana tol
ardently she enjoyed the anticipation o
a réunion in the country. Forgettin
St. Clair Park was always anythin
seclusion, and especially at such a gal
as that of Kingsland races.

CHAPTER V.

"None better skilled the noisy pack to guide,
To urge their chase; to cheer them, or to chide."
CRABBE.

ON the following morning, tired with one of the most brilliant balls of the season, Clara raised one of the windows which opened on a balcony in Grosvenor-square, which was filled with the choicest flowers, now in exquisite beauty; when turning to Lady St. Clair, who was listlessly reclining in a luxurious French chair, and reading one of the novels of the day, she said, "Do tell me whose that large house is opposite. I

have always forgotten to ask, and it has not been occupied since I was here. I am tired of seeing those eternal shutters."

"My dear Clara," said the Countess, as she raised her eyes at the question, "do come away from that open window. You will be talked of as much as the Ladies —— who sit in their greenhouse facing the park, in attitudes. Whose house is that? Why Sir James Eastham's—and—the idea never came into my head before—I have no doubt it may be yours. Here, come and sit down, and I will give you a full, true, and particular account of your sposo elect. I wonder I never thought of this before; it is well I have no daughters, for it is evident Nature never intended me for a manœuvrer."

"To begin, then, at the best end of my story. Sir James Eastham's place is in the neighbourhood of St. Clair Park, not more than six miles distant. It is not one of those 'make pretend,' as children say, Elizabethan houses, which it is so much the

fashion to build now, but one of the finest specimens in England of that beautiful old style when really genuine. There is altogether something quite princely about it, with its avenues of stately trees, and deer feeding quite up to the front of the house. In the back is a sloping terraced flower-garden, which might be made perfection if a little pains were taken with it. But flowers are not in Sir James's way, though he keeps up the whole place, of which he may well be proud, in excellent order. His fortune is one of the largest in the county, and all the mothers and daughters, too, have been trying for him this many a year, but in vain. He is now between forty and fifty, and a bachelor still, and, depend upon it, the prize is reserved for you, Clara."

"Of his personal appearance, I cannot say very much; he certainly is not handsome, and his manners are not those of London life—nevertheless, there is a certain something which tells us he is by birth at least a

gentleman; and, I have no doubt an elegant wife would improve him immensely. Hitherto, he has never sought ladies' society,—he is a great hunter, a great racer, in short, a thorough-going sportsman, with his heart and soul in his dog kennels and his stables; but *n'importe*, he may make a very kind husband, and, if I mistake not, you had rather be without a very sentimental one—so my Lady Eastham elect, I wish you joy of becoming mistress of that fine house opposite, and also of Eastham Court, to say nothing of twenty or thirty thousand a year. You will, of course, then come regularly to town, and we will be rival queens. Well, that is settled. Now ring the bell, *s'il vous plait*, I really think Kensington Gardens will be cooler than this hot room—we will order the carriage; and, I have just thought, this would be just the night for Vauxhall, and we have no engagement; we shall find plenty ready to join our party, I dare say, so we will go and see. That stiff Lord Stoneley won't let his daugh-

ters go without him, so we must take the evil with the good. By the bye, I am glad to see you and they have become such great friends, they are unexceptionable in that way; and you will find them delightful companions in the country, for they have always some delightful resource, and drive away ennui, even on a wet day. I expect to amuse you with some of our country neighbours when we get to St. Clair Park. I have some curious specimens in what I call my menagerie; but on the whole, you know, the society is excellent, and you will meet much the same set that you are with here, though they do not all come to town. Then I keep the house pretty well filled with a succession of visitors from a distance, so what with these, and those in our own county, I assure you we get on very gaily, and you will not find much of rustication in an English country-house, as it is now ordered. It combines the society of London with the freedom of the country. In

short, I believe I like the life there quite as well as this, and I have the advantage of my beautiful flower-garden. You know my passion for flowers; I will show you them at St. Clair Park in full perfection."

"Mais allons, let us prepare for our drive, it is too warm for riding, or that best shakes off the idleness consequent on a late ball—but a walk in Kensington Gardens will be a good substitute."

CHAPTER VI.

"The stately homes of England,
How beautiful they stand!
Amidst their tall ancestral trees,
O'er all the pleasant land!
The deer across their green-sward bound
Through shade and sunny gleam;
And the swan glides past them with the sound
Of some rejoicing stream."

MRS. HEMANS.

THE evening at Vauxhall turned out delightfully, as impromptu amusements generally do; Lady St. Clair collected a well-assorted party, and never had she, or Clara, appeared in better spirits.

They were to leave London for the country the following week, and the speedy

change of scene appeared to give zest to their enjoyment of that which they were now in, and to inspirit their determination of thoroughly enjoying the gaiety they were so soon to lose. Thus with untiring steps they attended all the parties which yet remained to them, though not quite with unblanched cheeks, for, when the morning of their departure actually arrived, Lord St. Clair observed, as he handed them into the travelling carriage, that he hoped the air of St. Clair Park would soon restore some of their faded roses.

The country they passed through was a picturesque one; and as pleasure and comfort were their end, not the whisking through the air with the greatest possible speed; our travellers abjured railroads, and took sufficient time to make their journey an agreeable one.

Clara had never seen so much of her uncle before, at least not to judge of his conversational powers, for, though she gene-

rally shared his nine o'clock breakfast, and frequently joined his and Banquo's regular morning walk to the banks of the Serpentine, where Lord St. Clair always took his favourite dog for a daily bath; yet in London he was so obstructed with politics and absorbed in the concoction of his evening's speech in the House of Lords, that Clara had found him anything but an amusing companion.

Now she was surprised to see the difference: he seemed to give himself up to the endeavour of making the hours pass agreeably to his companions, and throwing off all the natural proud coldness of his manners, he enlivened them with a constant strain of animated conversation.

The full stores of his cultivated mind frequently found scope in the scenes through which they passed; some famous in history, others well-known to the antiquary, led him alike to subjects on which he was well qualified to amuse and instruct his listeners.

It was not till towards the close of the

third days' journey that they came within sight of the St. Clair woods. There, as yet in the distance, they were hanging in a gradual slope over a rich and fertile valley, through which ran one of England's most picturesque rivers. And Clara thought the owner of such an old ancestral domain might well be proud of the blood which flowed in his veins.

"Here then," she said aloud, as they passed under the stone archway which led into the park, "here is that beautiful home which my dear mother has so often described to me. Each spot has been so minutely told of, to my childhood's listening ear, that it seems a familiar and a hallowed place, rather than one I have never seen before."

"Welcome, my dear niece, a hearty welcome to this once your mother's home, now your own," said the Earl, affectionately pressing her hand; "you will find the house greatly altered, and I think improved by Gertrude's taste—but you will find much

that is exactly as in your mother's day. The furniture of her own private apartments remains the same, and will now be yours. I shall like pointing out to you all the recent additions to the house and gardens, for I am sure you will admire the taste which dictated them," smiling kindly as he spoke, on his Countess.

"Nay, my dear Lord, say not *my* taste alone," replied Lady St. Clair, "you always aided and assisted with yours, and I am not architect enough, as you are, to have planned those beautiful colonnades in exact keeping with the style of the house. I only gave you the idea to work out correctly."

"Well, dear Gertude, I will willingly share anything with you, and Clara I hope will approve of our united taste. See, you will soon catch a glimpse of the house, when we pass these fine old oaks we are now approaching. The trees all seem in magnificent foliage this year."

A turn in the drive now brought them

within sight of the building, which was a magnificent modern structure from the model of an Italian Palazzo, and they soon passed through iron gates which separated the park from the closely-mown velvet sward and choice shrubs which surrounded this part of the house—the flower-gardens were on the other side.

Clara had never before seen so costly a modern mansion. The portico under which they drove to the entrance door, was supported by pillars of the Corinthian order, and on each side of the original edifice were open colonnades of the same elaborate architecture, through which were seen on the one hand a beautiful conservatory, now blooming with every varied hue, and on the other an orangery, whose rich perfumes greeted their arrival with all the genial warmth of a southern sky.

"Oh! my dear orange trees," exclaimed the eager Countess, "with what delicious fragrance do you meet me, and how re-

freshing after the smoke of London! You know, Clara, my love of flowers; even in London I contrived to gratify it, though on a limited scale to what I indulge in here. You shall revel in a very Paradise of sweets. I must just go in and speak to the old housekeeper, and then, before taking off our bonnets, it will refresh us to take a peep at the flower-garden. Lord St. Clair will show you the way through the conservatory to the other side of the house."

They were examining the long extent of this garden front, and his lordship pointing out which were the different suites of rooms, when Lady St. Clair rejoined, and led them to a grass terrace of velvet softness, below which spread the flower-garden, sloping in several gradations of the same beautifully kept grass, and to an extent far beyond what the eye could reach.

The first dinner-bell called them reluctantly from their stroll, and there was only time to lead Clara to her own apartments,

with the promise of showing her the house after dinner, which as they were alone, would be something to do, pour passer le temps.

Clara found Janet busy in the mysteries of unpacking and arranging everything in the spacious rooms allotted to her, and which were doubly dear from being those occupied by her mother, while Lady Adelaide St. Clair. So exactly was everything still the same, as her uncle had told her, that she could recognise the very colour of the paper, the pictures, the furniture, which had so often been described to her in her childish days, when, in the simplicity of her secluded home, she would listen with wonder to all the grandeur of St. Clair Park, little thinking it was one day to become her own home. There were some modern embellishments and luxuries, in which Clara could trace the correct taste of the Countess, for, though evidently of later date than the rest of the furniture, still they were in keeping with its general style.

"Oh, my dear Miss Clara," said Janet, with tears in her eyes, "I can almost fancy I see my poor lady sitting in that embroidered chair, so well do I remember her amusing you with all the flowers worked upon it, some by her own hands, and others by the Countess, your grandmother. See, here is the very rose I remember your laughing so about, when my lady told you of her puzzle in working it, and that she went twice without her dinner because she did it wrong, when the good-natured cook sent her some dinner up stairs, and, in her hurry in eating it, she greased her fingers, and left the mark upon the work. I wonder if it is there yet."

"Yes, indeed, dear Janet, I well recollect it all, and how I shall love this dear old chair as being partly my mother's work! We will look for the stain another day. I must now hasten to be in time for dinner."

At this moment, Lady St. Clair knocked at the door, and finding Clara not ready,

begged to be admitted to sit down while she completed her toilette. "And you need not be long, for we are quite alone. I come to pilot you through all these passages to my own little sitting-room, which we use when alone, in preference to the large state dining-rooms."

When they entered this elegant, but comparatively only small room, they found Lord St. Clair already awaiting their arrival, with his usual companion, Banquo, resting his curly head on his master's knee.

French windows down to the ground opened on the flower-garden, and Lord St. Clair stepped out to speak to the old gardener, whom he saw busily engaged in training a bed of jessamine; the Countess taking Clara's arm, quickly followed, and greeted the old man with all the kindliness of her nature, praising the beauty of his flower-beds, and the taste with which he had arranged the different colours. Tears of gratified pride almost filled his eyes, as he replied—

"Well, my lady, I am glad your ladyship is pleased, for you are so fond of the flowers, it is a pleasure to rear them for your ladyship; and then—you'll excuse an old man, my lady—I think the very flowers might be proud if they could see how beautiful they look in your ladyship's hair, where you sometimes condescend to put them, instead of them French artificials which Miss Violette boasts so of being just like nature, but to my mind they are not so beautiful or becoming either to your ladyship. Now, a sprig of this forget-me-not would look very nice among your curls, my lady; and, I should say some of these jessamine or scarlet verbenæ would show off well in that young lady's dark hair. You see, Miss, my lady has taught me some taste in what flowers to gather for ladies' hair."

"But may I make so bold, sure now I look again this is Miss Cameron; and, oh, how like, though with different coloured hair, and not so merry looking like, as her

dear, sweet mother, the Lady Adelaide. Ah! Miss, when a little girl, many's the hour she has spent with me in this garden; and I gathered the flowers to strew at her wedding. Little did I think to outlive her; but God's will be done."

Clara's eyes filled with tears as she held out her hand to the affectionate old man, who, respectfully taking it, said, "I am right glad to see you here, Miss; and with all the kind and noble look of a St. Clair: ay, I should have known you anywhere. I hope, Miss, you love flowers as your dear mother did before you, and my lady does now, and will come and cheer an old man sometimes with your pretty talk, who has not now much longer for this world. But my Lord knows I have been in this garden ever since I can remember anything, and my father before me; and it would break my heart at once to leave—so, kind and generous like, he lets me go on looking after things, and watching the trees I have

planted myself in younger days, though, God knows, I cannot do much work myself now, except such knick-knacks as these, and I take special note of this Jessamine bed, for it is a particular favourite of my lady's."

"Yes, indeed," said the Countess, "and you have brought it quite to perfection. I never saw it so luxuriant as this year—it is one mass of silver flowers. Give me a sprig, as you recommend, to put in Clara's hair. You will find her a true St. Clair in her love for flowers, I assure you. There, that is a beautiful branch—let me arrange it, Clara, in your dark hair, and then you shall do as much for me with some forget-me-not, which Reynolds shall select for me."

The delighted old man watched with glistening eyes the honour, as he called it, which his flowers came to; and with an innate poetry of feeling, which the culture and constant watching of this sweetest portion

of creation will frequently call forth in most unlettered minds, he called the Je mine wreath on Clara's brow like n begirt with stars, and said that the hu the forget-me-not was not ashamed by blue of my lady's eye.

Thus, mutually pleased, the dinner called them from the talkative old ı though not without his first begging lord would accept a splendid damask : bud for his coat, and he should then had the pride of decking them all ou their first dinner on returning home.

CHAPTER VII.

"It was a fair and brilliant summer sky,
And Earth's ripe treasures met th' admiring eye.
'No doubt,' said George, 'the country has its charms—
The verdant woodlands and its cultur'd farms.'"

CRABBE.

As they sate at breakfast the next morning, for in the country the Countess always was an early riser, the Earl informed them that while they had been looking over the house the preceding evening, he had been closeted with his steward, and had learned from him that the present member for the borough of Kingsland was dangerously ill, and that the Tories were already secretly canvassing for votes for an opposition,

which they were zealously determined to bring forward with great force.

"Now, my dear Gertrude," said Lord St. Clair, "I wish you would take the first opportunity of propitiating the tradespeople and gentry of Kingsland. You can go and call yourself, and select things from the different shops; never mind the cost; if your own finances run low, I give you carte blanche on mine. I can trust to your tact for bringing in some flattering words of their remaining true to the St. Clair interest, and principles of independence and reform. From you, nothing of this kind will appear like a direct canvass, which I wish particularly to avoid. You will have a more difficult game, and a more tiresome one, too, in conciliating the yclept gentry of the town, but you must put on your most winning smiles, for I hear that both the doctor and lawyer incline to the opposition party."

"Well, well, my dear Lord, you may depend upon my exerting all my 'esprit de

guerre;' my heart, you know, is in the cause of our Queen and country, and I have turned Clara into a right good Whig; so we will go together this very day and try our powers of agreeableness. I will have my favourite equipage—I hope my ponies are all well and ready for use."

"Yes," said Lord St. Clair; "I can answer for that, for Banquo and I have been the round of the stables before breakfast, and I saw that the whole set out was in readiness for you. Your favourite horse, too, which you left an invalid when we went to town, is now quite recovered and in fine condition; I never saw him look handsomer."

"That is delightful," replied the Countess; "now then, I can make over to Clara's use the horse I rode in town, and I will return to the dear Sultan. Clara, we shall have some delicious gallops together now—a delight denied to London riding. Well, I must own the country has many advantages."

At two o'clock, the ladies were ready for their drive to Kingsland, and Clara was charmed with the beautiful little carriage which awaited them. In this, as in the whole mênage, and house, and furniture, taste and elegance were united with splendour. This phaëton, of the newest build, was of dark green, with merely an earl's coronet for decoration, the lining was of crimson figured satin, bound and trimmed with gold to match the St. Clair livery, with a tiger's skin for rug. The ponies were a light grey, with flowing tails and manes, and two more, an exact match, stood ready to be mounted by their tiny grooms, in crimson and gold liveries.

As the Countess took the reins, which, in the part to meet her delicate fingers, were covered with white satin, she considerately praised the fine condition of her ponies, and the nice order in which they, and the carriage had been kept during her absence; thus conciliating the love of all. The establishment

at St. Clair Park was noted for the oldest and best servants in the county.

It is certainly a true adage, that "good masters make good servants."

The road to Kingsland lay in an opposite direction to that by which they had come from London; thus Clara passed through a part of the park yet more beautiful than that she had already seen. On one side was a wood of majestic old oaks, almost amounting to forest in the wildness of its scenery, the effect of which was heightened by the large red deer, not often seen in England, starting up, and, with their wild bright eyes, looking defiance at the intruders. On the other side wound the beautiful river already mentioned, and beyond it could be seen the spire of Kingsland Church, at intervals, peeping through the trees, at about three miles distance.

A drive of two miles brought the ladies to the extremity of the park, in this direction, and a lodge, of architecture to suit the house,

opened upon a good turnpike road, over which the spirited ponies soon took them into the town of Kingsland, which possessed nothing remarkable in beauty, and had the usual appendage of a race-course, a Town Hall, over which were handsome Assembly Rooms, and a gaol.

All eyes were eager to catch a glimpse of Lady St. Clair's gay equipage, and while she and Clara alighted at the principal shop of the place, the ponies and the whole miniature set-out continued to fix the gaze of the passers by, and to rivet the attention of some curious eyes eagerly peeping at so attractive a novelty from the windows of the opposite house, which was inhabited by the lawyer before mentioned.

His two maiden daughters, of a nameless age, were carefully hid from sight by the folds of a muslin curtain, rather soiled in colour from the original white.

"Dear me, Arabella, who can that young lady be with Lady St. Clair?—but she looks a mere child."

"Not so very juvenile either, I think," replied the younger sister, who set up herself for a belle, while her elder sister attempted the *blue* line. "Not so juvenile, either; and I do not at all admire the style of her dress, I never saw one like it before; and then that pale green satin bonnet with a branch of moss roses hanging so low down on one side looks very affected and unbecoming. Well, I declare, for once Lady St. Clair has no plume of feathers, but a wreath of blue convolvuluses round a white chip hat."

"You know," tartly answered Miss Cornelia, "that I never allow my mind to waste itself on the trivialities of dress. The gifts of thought and reason were given us for noble purposes, as all the philosophers teach us. The great Greek poet, too, the sublime Euripides, says—"

"Nay, nay, Cornelia, don't waste all your fine learning and your Latin and Greek on me; keep them to show off with when somebody is here."

While this discussion was going on between the Miss Quirks, the Countess and Clara had entered the shop of the obsequious Mr. Green, who was bowing his sense of the honour.

"I humbly and respectfully beg my lady, to welcome your ladyship back to the Park. I hope my lord and your ladyship are both in perfect health?"

"Quite well, thank you, Mr. Green, and I am delighted to find myself in the country again. We only arrived yesterday."

"So I heard my lady, and I am proud to see your ladyship so soon."

"Why really, Mr. Green, with so good a shop as yours to go to, it is useless bringing things from London, and I am wanting a great many just now, more than I shall have time to select this morning. I have brought you too, a new, and I doubt not, good customer, in Miss Cameron, Lord St. Clair's niece."

"I am proud of yours and Miss Came-

ton's kind favours," said Mr. Green, with a yet lower bow. "What may I show your ladyship this morning?"

After selecting some of the most costly things the shop afforded, and while twenty yards of pink satin were being measured off, Lady St. Clair remarked,

"By the bye, Mr. Green, I hope you have plenty of blue and buff satin and ribbons. I hear a sad account of poor Mr. Danvers's health, and I fear we shall have an election soon. You know these are the colours for the liberal side, and I shall want a plentiful supply. The candidate, when there is a vacancy, I must not mention names yet, is a particular friend of mine. I know you are of our politics, so I don't mind mentioning this now. Oh, I fear my twenty yards of pink satin will leave you an awkward number; give me the whole piece, if you please."

"Thank you, my lady," said the now puzzled-looking Mr. Green. "As to the

election, I am sorry there is to be a contest. I don't know what to say, my lady. The Duke of Kingsland's steward was here last week, and hoped I should support their candidate, who, he hinted, was to be the young Marquis himself; but I made no promises, and I am sure, if possible, I would rather oblige your ladyship than anybody. The Duchess of Kingsland never comes into my shop herself, but only sends her maid, and that not very often. It is not in my nature to refuse anything to the ladies, my lady."

"That is quite right, Mr. Green," said the gracious canvasser; "I was quite sure I should have your vote and interest for my friend; I shall depend upon your promise."

"Certainly, my lady—I never disappoint the ladies. Shall I send this parcel up to the park?"

"Oh, dear no, thank you—there is plenty of room under the carriage seat. Good morning, Mr. Green."

"We have now rather more difficult cards to play, Clara," said Lady St. Clair, on leaving the great shop of Kingsland. "You really must help me. The house we are now to call at is just opposite the lawyer's,—we need not get into the carriage, till we see if we are admitted.

The peeping Miss Quirks flew from the window, on the reverberating knock which announced their visitors. "Dear me," said the beauty sister, "I must just run and smooth my hair, and put on a clean worked collar."

"Dear me," said the blue sister; "where are my German books and my last drawing?"—and she had just time to seat herself studiously to a volume of Schiller, and place her drawing in a conspicuous situation, when the door was opened by a dirty boy with, as Theodore Hook would say, "a suffusion of yellow buttons," on a now greasy jacket.

Lady St. Clair possessed the enviable art

of making herself agreeable, if she chose, to any class of society, and the tact readily to seem at ease with characters the most incongruous to her own. Advancing towards Miss Quirk, with rather an air of condescension, she requested to introduce her niece, Miss Cameron.

Miss Quirk begged the ladies would be seated, and a heightened colour and fidgetty movements, showed she was rather embarrassed by such visitors, though her blueism led her always to assert, that a cultivated mind like hers, put her on an equality, and often on a pre-eminence with the noblest born in the land.

"I hope you and your sister have been quite well since I left the country," said Lady St. Clair. "Ah! here she comes with blooming looks, to answer the question herself. I assure you, Miss Arabella Quirk, our faded London cheeks would be glad to borrow some of your roses."

"Oh, your ladyship is very flattering to

say so," simpered Miss Arabella; "but, for my part, I think there is something very interesting in a pale style of beauty."

Lady St. Clair duly made the agreeable, by remarking upon Miss Quirk's love of German literature, and offering to lend her a new novel in that language, and admiring her picture with all due admiration.

Miss Arabella, fearing her talents were rather hid in the shade, drew from a capacious basket on the table a dress which she was embroidering in blue worsted; the pattern was atrocious, and the shade of colour glaring. But the Countess could control her countenance better than Clara, with whom a laugh was impending, and politely admired the good taste with which it was designed, adroitly edging in, "And how very fortunate! the colour will just suit the election which, I fear, is hanging over our heads. The colour of blue will suit you admirably, I think."

Miss Quirk thought that now was a time to

display her learning and skill in argument. "Indeed, Lady St. Clair, I do not know that we shall take the side of the liberal candidate; these are awful times in which we live. I fear a second French revolution is advancing with rapid strides in our own ill-fated country, and it is the duty of Englishmen to support the Church and established institutions of the land."

"I fully agree with you," said Lady St. Clair, "in the latter opinion, but I cannot see any fear of revolution, and the surest way to prevent the danger, should it exist, is to elevate the morals of the people by education. I am convinced Miss Quirk must advocate the principles which would diffuse general education and a taste for literature. A mind so enlarged would not keep the stores of knowledge all to herself."

"Indeed, Lady St. Clair, your observations are very correct; but, when the Duchess of Kingsland and Lady Thorndale were here yesterday, they quite frightened me by the

threatened terrors of civil war, and the influence which Popery was gaining under the present administration."

"Oh ho!" thought the Countess, so the ground has been tried before me."

"I am sure, Miss Quirk, your masculine mind would fully answer these frivolous charges, and I should like to have seen how well you have silenced the Duchess. I have no doubt you urged, though in much more powerful language than I can use, that this cry is only got up by a party, and for party purposes; that the only persons likely to attempt a civil war are ranged under the banners of those who pretend to fear one, and use a violence of language and a disloyalty of tone calculated to awaken any latent sparks of commotion and revolt, and that, so far from Popery increasing, the Pope was never less powerful than at the present day."

"Yes," said the gratified Miss Quirk, pleased to be thought capable of silencing a

duchess; "yes, I did use some such arguments, and they must be convincing to every candid and enlightened mind."

"With these opinions," said the Countess, "I am sure you will use your potent influence in the good cause of manly independence, and that a particular friend of mine, who will come forward on the liberal side, will obtain your vote and interest. I say *vote*, for I am sure your father cannot resist your arguments, and your sister's smiles, too, will join this side. But here he comes, to answer for himself. Welcome, Mr. Quirk, to join our political debate, though debate I should not say, as we are all of the same opinion. Your daughter has been delighting me with an account of the masterly manner in which she yesterday refuted the futile fears of the Duchess of Kingsland on the no Popery question. I must bring my friend before the election commences, to learn from her how to answer his opponents on the hustings."

"Yes, yes," chuckled the father, who was

particularly vain of his daughter's talents, "it is a pity Cornelia was not a man; she would have made a figure in the world, I do not doubt. But did you answer the Duchess so cleverly yesterday, my dear? why, you never told me a word about it."

"No, no," interposed the Countess, "you do not think it likely she should sound her own praises; I only learned it accidentally. I am delighted the Whig candidate has the powerful support of your family."

"Why, my lady," hesitated Mr. Quirk, unwilling to commit himself, "I do not know that I can quite say that, that I am quite at liberty to go so far; for yesterday, the Marquis of Thorndale called on me, and rather hinted that he was to be the Tory candidate himself. To be sure, he did not exactly ask me for his vote, but" * *

"Really, Mr. Quirk, I can have no *buts*," interrupted Lady St. Clair, "I am sure you will not desert your daughter's talents in the good cause of fighting for the education of the people."

"Certainly not, my lady, certainly not, and, as Cornelia has gone so far with the Duchess, I must not, as you say, desert her; therefore, my vote and humble services shall be at your friend's command."

"Thanks, Mr. Quirk, a thousand thanks; Lord St. Clair desired his best compliments to you, and hopes soon to have the pleasure of seeing you at the park."

"Assuredly, my lady, I will hasten to pay my respects to his lordship, and perhaps he will give me some instructions towards being useful in the return of a liberal member." And he handed the Countess into her carriage, who left the impression behind her, that she was the sweetest person in the world.

"Now, Clara," said the laughing Lady St. Clair, "did not I manage that admirably? Why, poor Miss Quirk dare no more have differed in opinion from the Duchess of Kingsland, than she dare jump out of the window, but I crammed my own words

so delightfully into her mouth, I positively believe I mystified her as to whether she said them or not; and, as to the old father, I only made him believe his daughter yet more clever than he imagined, to be able to silence the redoubtable Duchess, who rules it with a high hand, I assure you; I will make one more call, and then my agreeableness will be exhausted for to-day. I hope I may be equally successful; but, Clara, you do not help me a bit, and once you nearly made me laugh, when that tremendous blue pattern made its appearance. I am, however, used to the kind of thing, and when I enter that house, make up my mind to all the horrible things I shall have to admire, or else be thought proud and fastidious, which it is not worth while for the sake of a few white lies. I must now pursue a different line of flattery. Do you like children, and can you nurse a baby? But never mind answering, I will put you to the proof if the Doctor's wife is at home; and they drove up

to a large red house in the principal street of Kingsland, with B. Brown, Surgeon, &c. &c., engraved in large flourishing letters, on a very brightly-painted door.

Mr. Brown was an old man of seventy, who, late in life, had married a young wife, and, much to his delight, had become the father of six children. Mrs. Brown was a fat, vulgar, little woman, whose whole thoughts were centred in these spoiled, and noisy children, and it seemed to be a trial between papa and mamma which could indulge them the most. In going up the stairs, Lady St. Clair nearly fell down over a broken wheelbarrow; and Clara, worse off still, set her foot into a half eaten gooseberry tart, much to the detriment of a delicate satin shoe. No one was in the evidently "best parlour" into which they were shown. Slips of variously coloured cut paper adorned the grate; the table in the middle of the room was neatly laid all round

with books in gaudy bindings, and in the centre, was a smart work-box, evidently more for show than use. At one side of the room was a scarlet moreen sofa set against the wall, and opposite to it a book-case, filled with some really fine specimens of old china, the effect of which was spoilt by an extraordinary mixture of glaring gilt porcelaine, in the shape of vases and figures, with sundry other frippery, bought at sales and auctions. The gay coloured paper was occasionally hid by some prints, and over the chimney-piece a picture of the fair mistress of the house, dressed, as she never was in her life, in a crimson velvet gown, with a bandeau of pearls round her head, surmounted with white feathers. There was full time to admire these articles of taste before Mrs. Brown made her appearance, having thought it necessary "to smarten herself up a bit," as she would call it, before she came, and also to dress all the children in their best frocks, in case they were asked for.

After the usual topics of a morning call were gone through, Lady St. Clair hoped she might have the pleasure of seeing the children, who were immediately sent for, and such a bawling and screaming forthwith ensued along the passage, as Clara had never heard before. Master Frederick rushed into the room first, pushing Miss Brown down at the same time, while little Miss Fanny contrived to pinch her fingers in the door, and such a howl ensued as was only to be equalled by the roar of the baby, a great fat boy of ten months old, when he saw there were strangers in the room.

In the midst of this din, Mr. Brown happily came in from his ride, and helped his wife to soothe the storm. Master Frederick was called, "a naughty rude boy" for pushing his sister, but kissed at the same time, while Miss Brown was picked up and promised a piece of cake if she would "only hush and be quiet," and little Fanny's pinched fingers were cured by a sugar-plum out of

papa's pocket. Now there was only the baby to pacify, who, taken on his mamma's knee, was beginning to amuse himself by pulling a large gilt chain suspended round her neck, and holding a locket with all the little darling's hair in it, tied together with gold thread.

"What an amazingly fine boy this is!" said Lady St. Clair, attempting to take a hand which was crammed into his mouth. "I like to see children shy at this age; but I must look particularly at the size of his head, for I fear a blue satin hat and feathers, which I could not resist bringing him from London, will want a little letting out, but that I dare say your ingenuity can contrive, Mrs. Brown. Do not you think blue will suit him delightfully, and the shape of this hat pleased me extremely as being something quite new. I am sure he will be the admiration of the town, for it is so difficult to get a pretty hat for a child in the country."

"Yes, that indeed it is," said Mrs. Brown, "I am always very particular that the shape should be genteel; and I am sure it is most kind of you, my Lady, to have thought of our baby. Is it not, Mr. Brown?"

"Yes, my dear," said the smiling Mr. Brown, "I certainly take it as a particular favour."

"But," added the Countess, hesitating, "this is very unfortunate, I hear there is to be a severe contest for Kingsland on poor Mr. Danvers's death, and, as every little thing is watched and made of consequence in these times, and I hear Mr. Brown takes the other side, his little boy must not wear the enemy's colours. I am so sorry, I thus cannot send you the blue hat. I shall throw it in the fire, for as I intended it for this fine little fellow, no other shall wear it."

Poor Mrs. Brown looked beseechingly at her husband, who could not resist the pathetic appeal, and with flushed cheeks he said,

"Really I think people make very free with my name, in asserting which party I shall advocate. I never said I was a Tory, or should favour the Tory candidate—on the contrary, I think there is a great deal which needs reform. Do not look so distressed, my dear, at the loss to our boy, I see no reason in the world why we should not avail ourselves of Lady St. Clair's obliging present; and, when the time comes, I shall be very happy to wear a blue ribbon in my button-hole too, if her Ladyship will give me one."

"This is indeed delightful," exclaimed the Countess; "from what I had heard I feared your influence was going quite the other way, Mr. Brown; and, as we all know how much weight it carries into which ever scale it is thrown, I do not wonder that the opposition wished to make it appear their own. I am very glad that I chanced to mention the subject this morning, for going on in

this error I should have feared to ask you to any of our Whig parties, which in the event of an election we must have, and which in the other case might have been disagreeable to yourself. I shall not fail to tell Lord St. Clair to put your name down first as one of the liberal electors of Kingsland. I will send the little hat to-morrow Mrs. Brown, and you must bring the little fellow some day to St. Clair Park to show me how handsome he looks in it."

"That will be a great honour," simpered Mr. Brown. "I will certainly avail myself of your obliging permission some fine morning, and drive Mrs. Brown and the little fellow over."

CHAPTER VIII.

"It has been said in ancient rules,
That flattery is the food of fools,
Yet now and then your men of wit
Will condescend to taste a bit."

SWIFT.

"In solemn grandeur now she left her coach,
And made with haughty bearing her approach."

CRABBE.

THE drive back to St. Clair Park was soon accomplished, and hearing Lord St. Clair was in the flower-garden, the ladies went to join him. The smiling face of the countess told her success, and, when she and the laughing Clara recounted the whole of their adventures, and the potent

draughts of flattery administered by the countess, the usually grave earl entered with more mirth into the recital than Clara had thought it possible for him to do.

"Indeed, my dear Gertrude, you have achieved wonders. Who would not wish for a pretty face to canvass for him, and that one a countess, too? You seem to have made your honeyed words doubly sweet, and your interview with the Miss Quirks must have been a capital scene. But I must not send you on any more such errands, I think, lest you become such an adept in the art of flattery, that you try your skill upon me. I must write to Cecil Aston, and tell him how favourably the wind sets in his favour. I think he is a young man of superior abilities, and if he does but make as good a figure in the house as I anticipate, I hope, with my interest, he may yet retrieve his fallen fortunes. It is melancholy to see so old a family go to decay. Talking of decay, I wish you would come

with me, and see if you can suggest any thing for propping up our favourite old cedar a little longer. I should grieve to lose it."

At the moment they turned the corner towards the front of the house, a carriage and four, with two outriders, drove up to the door. Clara wished to make her escape, but, on seeing the liveries of the Duchess of Kingsland, Lady St. Clair declared she should stop to be introduced.

Lord St. Clair, with all the courtesy of the old school, went to hand the ladies from their carriage, and Lady St. Clair advanced to meet her guests. Clara had not seen the family from Kingsland-house, owing to their not having come this year to town, the real cause for which was the convenience of a year's economy in the country; but the avowed one, that the young Marchioness of Stavordale was expecting her confinement, and their anxiety that the heir of Kingsland should be born on the domain of his ancestors, and the whole family were too much

interested in the event to leave home at such an important moment.

The duchess was a little sharp-faced woman; nothing forgetful that she was a countess in her own right, besides the rank gained from her husband, who had been raised to a dukedom during the last Tory administration. Her voice was shrill and discordant, of which she gave her hearers the full advantage, by generally pitching it in a high key, and with as much of acri mony in the words as in the sound.

Her daughter-in-law, Lady Stavordale was a very different person. The only chil of a rich West India merchant, her feature were decidedly those of a half-caste, but wit that extraordinary grace and flexibility c figure and motion, for which they are pecu liar. This, joined to a large languishing ey of the deepest black, made her altogether very interesting looking girl, and one who ap peared to shrink from the cold and repellin hauteur of the Duchess, who seemed only t

tolerate her because she now was Marchioness of Stavordale and eventually bringing a fortune far beyond what any nobleman's daughter could have done.

"You have had a very gay season in town, I hear," said the Duchess; "and I fear your niece will find the country dull, though the races coming on will bring some gaiety. My daughters have so many resources within themselves, they were really glad for once to have a summer's quiet this year."

"Yes, indeed," replied the Countess, "we have had a remarkably brilliant season in town: I never remember it so full, or such a choice réunion of pleasant persons. The Queen's parties are a great addition to London, and her Majesty's graceful and pleasing manners make them yet more delightful. It is quite beautiful to see her dance."

"I should have thought," shrieked the Duchess, in her shrillest tones, "that the atmosphere of our present court, was not one in which you would have liked to place

your niece—but things are altered since my young days."

"I should think so," mildly replied Lady St. Clair,—and though, as she said, the spirit of mischief would sometimes prompt her with a provoking remark, which she could not resist, she was too really and innately well-bred to pursue any subject disagreeable to those she was conversing with, and therefore, adroitly turned the conversation into another channel.

After the due exchange of civilities, and hoping soon to see Lady St. Clair and Miss Cameron at Kingsland House, the pompous Duchess took her leave.

"There, Clara, do you think poor Miss Quirk dare have contradicted that good lady? I was amused to see how carefully she steered off from politics with me; knowing I suppose 'she should catch a tartar.' You have a pleasure yet to come in seeing the rest of the family. The Duke is generally laid up with the gout, and proportionably

surly. Three such heads were never seen, as their hopeful progeny present—the two Ladies Kingsland with red hair and the Marquis with white wool,—or more like it than any thing else in nature. It is curious that white wool and black should have come together for such a delightful contrast: but I will not say a word against the poor little Marchioness, for I do think she seems an amiable, gentle girl, and sadly domineered over by her arrogant mother-in-law."

CHAPTER IX.

"We parted—days and years have past;
Since I have gazed upon him last,
Yet still the memory haunts each scen
Of what I am, and might have been."

EXTRACT FROM THE DIARY OF CLARA CA

St. Clair P

HERE then we are settled in the
for six or sev

keeping, and every thing which luxury can give, or fastidiousness invent, is at the service of the guests, who seem to come in gradual succession, and none staying long enough to tire, or to be tired. When I say, I can conceive nothing more delightful than this, I mean I *now* cannot do so. Time was when my ideas of happiness were very different, but, as the day-dreams of youth are over, it is necessary to try other sources for filling up that void in the heart, which, spite of all my attempts to the contrary, will sometimes make itself be felt. But this is a train of thought I must not indulge in. I must endeavour only to think of the present, and to forget the past.

The variety of country neighbours are something quite new to me, not that all the society we have round us can exactly come under that class, for many whom we know well in London, are also our near associates here, or at least within reach. It amuses me to hear some, who fancy themselves the

very élite of the county people, and scarcely condescend to speak to others who have less ancient blood in their veins, whom I recognise as Nobodies in the London world of fashion, and whose parties there the Countess always avoids, as a crowded disagreeable medley. But here the thing is reversed, and you certainly meet only the best of the county families at their houses. Now it is not so with my aunt; in town no one can be more particular as to whom she visits, but here all exclusiveness is cast aside, and she asks all and everybody that amuse or please her, to her house, consequently, I have already seen some very pleasant and some very odd people.

I will amuse myself by detailing the first impression that the dramatis personæ made upon me; it will be curious to see a few months hence whether my first impressions of them have been correct. I shall prove my skill as a physiognomist if I succeed well; if not, my favourite belief will be

weakened. I will introduce them as they made their calls at St. Clair Park.

Mrs. and Miss Mountaine. My first impression was that the groom of the chambers had mistaken and ushered in her cook, so large were the elder lady's dimensions, and so luxuriant her colour and breadth of countenance. "Oh! my dear Lady St. Clair," said the fat lady, as she waddled up the room, "I am delighted to see you returned to the Park and looking as well as ever: how astonishingly you bear this overpowering heat, the lassitude and debility it occasions me are dreadful — but then my nerves and my frame are both so delicate, so fragile (taking out a ponderous smelling bottle and applying it very audibly to her nose). If this weather continues, I think my spirit will quit its earthly tenement. My dear Antoinette," turning to a plain but unaffected girl who came with her, "do untie my bonnet for me, I fear I shall faint."

Lady St. Clair is the most popular per-

son in the world here, and she flew to do it for her, and with really a grave face, though I caught a significant glance of her eye: as she passed me, she stooped her elegant figure before the vast dimensions of her visitor, saying, "Do lean on me, and come into the conservatory, the fresh air will revive you. I am sorry, indeed, to see you appear so ill and weak, it was too kind of you in such a state to make the exertion of coming to see me."

"Yes, indeed," said the panting lady, rising from her seat, "it was an exertion, but I felt so anxious to see you, and in my state of health there is no knowing how long I may be able to get out and see my friends. Your conservatory is looking beautiful," she added, as they passed into it through the folding glass-doors, which opened out of the room in which we were sitting. "I wish I could get a gardener like yours—but then you attend and give directions yourself; I wish I had your strength of constitution."

At this moment, I turned to talk to Miss Mountaine, who remained with me in the room, when a loud crash in the conservatory called us both there, where, seated on the remains of two superb camellas which she had dragged down in her fall, sate prostrate on the ground the unfortunate Mrs. Mountaine.

"My dear mother, what is the matter?" exclaimed the daughter, though apparently less alarmed than I was, being perfectly used to such exhibitions.

"Oh! my dear," said the fainting, though still rosy lady, "that mignonette, that mignonette—do take it away—you know the smell always overpowers me." The offending flower was removed, but not so easily Mrs. Mountaine from her recumbent position, which was at length effected, and with no other disaster than the complete demolition of the camellas.

At length, we were again quietly seated in the drawing-room, and this pretty nervous

scene having been played off, the lady thought she might now be at ease, and enjoy herself during the rest of the visit; but, unfortunately for her returning health, some more visitors were announced, and it was necessary they too should see the sad weak state of her nerves.

"Lady Williamson and the Miss Williamsons," said the sonorous voice of the groom of the chambers, as a tall, thin, bustling lady entered, followed by two dressed-up-dollish-looking girls, and interestingly attired alike, in every iota of their habiliments, though one sister being dark, with a flaming colour, and the other fair and pale, one had sadly sacrificed to the taste of the other. In this case, the elder had suffered, for her crimson peony cheeks ill accorded with the delicate lilac of a bonnet and pelisse, which really looked very well on the fair face and slight figure of the younger.

"How charmingly cool your delightful room is, my dear Lady St. Clair!" said Lady

Williamson, "I always say how I envy you this room to the north (unfortunately a southern sun was blazing against the closed Venetian blinds), it is so very desirable to have a sitting-room to the north. I have thought of altering mine, but it cannot be accomplished; the sun, you know, will not move to accommodate us." And a pretty girlish little simper followed this witty remark.

"My dear Lady St. Clair, what a beautiful dress you have got on! May I ask if you still employ Madame —— ? You are always the very best dressed person I know —you have such taste in dress. Now, my girls," turning to the lilac young ladies, "do not you think you could remember the pattern of that trimming, and describe it to your maid to make for you?"

"Oh pray do not take that trouble," said the obliging Countess, "you shall have my dress to copy from. I will desire it may be sent to you."

"How very kind of you!" said the again simpering mother; "I am sure my girls are so much obliged to you. "But," drawing her chair to within a confidential whisper, "but I have some very interesting business to talk to you about; you remember the poor woman you were so good as to get into the Bellington Infirmary for me?" (I saw Lady St. Clair had not the slightest recollection of the subject) "now only think, she has come out cured, that is *almost* cured, there is nothing, the medical man assures me, but nourishing food and going to the baths at Seaforth. Now I have sent her a good dinner every day since she came home, and given her my famous receipt for debility, which is cows' hoofs boiled in port wine, and which I have never known fail. Jemima, my dear," turning to her younger daughter, "you know the exact proportion, what is it?"

"Half a pound of cows' hoofs, which are to be boiled to a jelly, and then a pint of port wine, or porter, added."

"Yes, my dear, that is quite right, thank you; but I prefer the wine in most cases, though sometimes the porter answers as well. But, my dear Lady St. Clair, I was going to ask if you are not a subscriber to these baths, and could therefore give poor Mary Clark an admission to them free of expense? I have promised to send her half the way in my own carriage."

My aunt began to look rather tired, I saw, by this time, but she answered with her usual winning smile, and promised all that Lady Williamson desired.

The two ladies now severally made their exit; Mrs. Mountaine, with the languid step of an invalid, and Lady Williamson with all the briskness of fifteen.

"Thank heaven, they are gone," said my poor aunt, as the door closed upon them; "these two people are the plagues of my life, in different ways, and to have them both inflicted upon me at once is really a hard case; I think I must go myself to the

Seaforth baths, to recruit. Did you e
see such torments in their different wa
That lackadaisical Mrs. Mountaine has
molished my two finest camellas, and L
Williamson has prevented my ever wear
this dress again, which I put on for the fi
time this morning, and really think is m
in good taste; not from that odious wom
liking it, but, if you remember, Er
Cavendish remarked it was exactly the ri
thing, when Violette brought it in for
spection, one morning, when he was w
us, and his word is law in such matte
he really has a beautiful taste in everythi
n'ést ce pas vrais, ma chere."

"And in nothing more shown than
his admiration of you, cara Contessa—"
she playfully stopped my mouth with
white hand, and, kissing my cheek,
out of the room.

I do not like moralizing, or else I sh
on the subject of this Ernest Cavendish
my beautiful aunt. She is a lovely c

ture, and as pure in heart as she is lovely; and yet I cannot but fear what may be the effect of the continued attentions of this libertine, for such is his general character. The effect on herself I firmly believe will be harmless, but it may cast a shade over her in the opinion of a world always addicted to scandal. From this I would shield her if I could—further, I have no fear for her, not even for her *peace*, for I do not think he is the sort of person to awake the dormant affections of her heart, for that she has a *heart*, I can plainly see through all the gaiety and brilliancy of her manners. Married to a man old enough to be her father—who, though always most kind and attentive, has no tastes in common with hers—she is thrown entirely upon herself for amusement. And where can she so readily find it as in that constant course of gaiety and adulation which meets her at every step? This Ernest Cavendish is the fashion—she is flattered by his exclusive prefer-

ence, and pleased with his conve
which is certainly *piquante;* but,
than this, I do not think her feelin
her. Woe betide that light heart
any one teach it how to love, and t
not her husband!

But my pen is wandering stran
was drawing characters, and have
to sentiment; this is dangerous grou
on which I will trust neither thoug
pen—so the one I will lay down, a
the other into a safer train.

CHAPTER X.

"A joy thou art, and a wealth to all—
A bearer of hope into land and sea;
Sunbeam—what gift hath the world like thee?"

MRS. HEMANS.

"There stands a mansion of the olden time—
How tall the forest trees, the deer how sleek;
But turn we to the work of mortal hands—
Cast in a mould magnificent, how stands
The pile in stately beauty ———."

HOLLOND.

THERE was pleasure laughing in the Countess of St. Clair's bright blue eyes as she danced with girlish glee in to Clara's dressing-room.

"Come, dearest, come, let us not waste more of this splendid day in the house; and we have been I know not how long in the

...eet. But
am just in the mood fo
gallop, and we will ride
Park. I have ordered ou
sure you would join me i
a glorious morning as this
warm nor too cold—the v
a day for enjoying a ride.
spirits only to think of it."

Lady St. Clair's gay mo
tagious, for Clara's eyes s
gaily as her own, when, s
favourite horses, they put
speed on a fine level piece
Clair Park.

"Bravo, Bravo," said a vo
"I am sure that must be Lad
her ...

that young lady mounted on Arab," patting the neck of the beautiful grey horse he was riding.

"Will Arab carry a lady?" asked the Countess.

"He has never been so honoured," said his owner, again patting the noble animal, "but I will answer for his doing it, like every thing else, to perfection. Do you know, Lady St. Clair, it is a fancy of mine that if ever I choose a wife she shall be as handsome of her kind as he is of his, and one, moreover, that can ride this fine fellow; by Jove, what a pair they will be! I wish to Heaven you were not married, Lady St. Clair, for I never saw any woman sit a horse like you. I would as soon have an ugly wife as one that could not sit well on horseback. I know some who look for all the world like a bag of meal set up on the saddle, and as if the least push would send them off. No, no, my wife shall know how to ride, that I am determined."

"Matrimony seems to be running wondrously in your head this morning, Sir James; pray are you in love."

"No, faith, that I am not, but I often wish when I am across Arab that I could find a fair rider worthy of him; for, after all, perfect as he is, he is more fit for a lady's horse than anything else—he has paces, and temper, and beauty, and, in short, every requisite. Which way is your ladyship going, may I be allowed to accompany you?"

"Oh! certainly, with pleasure; we were just going your road. You know it is a favourite ride of mine through your park. Miss Cameron, allow me to introduce Sir James Eastham to you."

Clara caught a sly glance from the laughing blue eye turned upon her, and she blushed at the consciousness of the thoughts which she knew inspired it, and there was a degree of constraint in the returning bow which she made to Sir James's salutations.

Perhaps it was flattered with the blush

which stole over her beautiful features, and which made her look even more than usually beautiful, for she soon absorbed as much of his attention as he could withdraw from Lady St. Clair.

The impression he made on Clara was certainly unmixed with the admiration she inspired him with, but, on the whole, it was as favourable as she had expected it would be, from Lady St. Clair's previous description. He decidedly looked better on horseback than in any other way, for, being a remarkably good rider, it gave almost an air of elegance to his attitudes which they never possessed at other times, being little given to the refinements of female society. His complexion was naturally fair, but now sun-burnt and rough, from constant exposure to all weathers, and a profusion of light hair extended down his cheek almost to meet under his chin. His features were by no means either regular or handsome, and the only redeeming points were a

good-natured eye and a fine
teeth, which a very frequent laugh
particularly advantageous. Still,
decidedly without good looks, there
je ne scai quoi about him, which pro
him a gentleman by birth, though o
had spent more of his time in the dog-
the stable, or the betting stand, tha
drawing-room. Nor did his conve
belie this exterior. He was naturally
but a constant intercourse with bla
and jockeys, and every thing connecte
the turf, had so strongly imbued hi
their slang terms that, even to lad
seldom spoke without them, and was fa
read in the Racing Calendar and
man's Magazine than in any other
ment of literature. His favourite
nions were, of course, those of simila
and pursuits with his own, and thoug
sometimes brought him in associatio
the noblest and the highest in the lan
they oftener brought him in contact w
lowest and most depraved.

Yet with all his faults, Sir James Eastham had few vices, and had long been the favourite mark for all the match-makers and speculating mothers and daughters in the county. The lineal descendant of one of the oldest Baronetcies in the kingdom, and possessed of a splendid place in the country, as well as a mansion in Grosvenor-square, with a fortune in proportion,—no wonder he was eagerly courted and flattered, but, disgusted with the one and indifferent to the other, his heart had yet remained invulnerable, though he had arrived at the mature age of forty-five, and, to use his own expression, "he stood fire so well, he thought they would soon give in."

After riding a few miles along the turnpike-road, they reached one of the entrances to Eastham Court, which was the name of Sir James's place.

The uncle of the present owner had possessed an elegant and correct taste, and everything he had done in the way of

addition or improvement was in strict accordance with the magnificent, though ancient, abode of his ancestors.

The house was one of the finest specimens extant of the true Elizabethan architecture, and still stood in all its native purity and unity of design. The massive stone-work of the windows, and the venerable turrets and archway, which led into the inner court, told of an age long passed away, and spoke of feudal grandeur, and baronial magnificence. Every thing was kept up in the highest state of preservation, and gave assurance of wealth, equal to the extent of the building.

The approach to this beautiful mansion was through a park of great extent, whose beauties consisted in the bountiful gifts of nature, unspoiled by the innovations of modern art. Magnificent oaks, which had flourished through many succeeding generations, hung their large branches over the road, and gave a stately grandeur to the

scene, while patches of the yellow gorse, now in bloom, imparted a picturesque wildness to the scene, and, as Sir James said, "was an excellent cover for foxes." To the right was a clear and large sheet of water, backed by a hanging wood, then glowing in all the luxuriance of summer foliage, and, in the far distance was a bold outline of hills which mingled in the blue of the sky. To the left could be seen the lofty turrets of the mansion, and, though at first apparently nearer, it was a ride of several miles before Sir James and his fair companions reached the massive pallisades, which kept the numerous deer and horses from a close approach to the house.

Sir James in vain entreated Lady St. Clair to alight, and, though she was half inclined to give Clara a sight of the splendid picture-gallery of the old masters and the fine collection of Italian sculpture which adorned the old hall, and gleamed strangely with their marble whiteness against the

carved oak panelling hung round with ancient armour, she resisted the impulse, both from her own natural delicacy and right feeling in such matters, and from a determination that Clara should never enter the lists with those ladies who had already assailed Eastham Court with so determined a siege. She might laughingly tell Clara she should become its mistress, but never would her high, pure spirit, condescend to manœuvre to attain that position.

Therefore, the interior of the house was left to be viewed at a more fitting time, and both ladies bowing to the owner, left him at the entrance to his stable-yard, where he gazed after them until they disappeared among the old oaks, and he could only distinguish the crimson liveries of the two grooms, as they followed at a short distance.

"I wonder whether that man is looking after us, or our horses, Clara. What do you think?" said Lady St. Clair, "but really, I do believe you have made a conquest of his

obdurate heart. I never saw him try to faire l'agréable before; and he positively made the attempt of talking of something else besides his horses and dogs to amuse you; and then his compliments on your good riding; he never deigned to praise that of any one but mine before, though poor Lady Williamson bought a horse for her daughter on purpose that one or other might charm him."

"By the bye," said Clara, "do tell me who that Lady Williamson is. I was going to ask you before, the day she called, but you ran away in such a hurry, and afterwards I forgot it."

"Who is she? Why, really I do not know. I never remember pedigrees, except that of my horse," stooping to pat the arched neck of the beautiful thorough-bred animal she was riding; "but I will tell you all I know. She is the widow of an old Sir Thomas Williamson, who, by some means or other, got knighted; he was dead before I

came into this part of the world. I suppose she killed him by her fidgety ways. I only wonder her daughters survive them, and all her eternal prescriptions into the bargain; but I believe she only physics the poor, and leaves her own family out of the scrape. Really it is a strange taste, that of liking to doctor people, and one of her daughters inherits it. You can never mention an ailment but she has an infallible prescription ready to offer for your service. Did you ever hear of such a mess as they were giving that poor creature, and which made me sick to listen to, without the minute receipt they would inflict upon me?

"I think the good lady must almost have given Sir James up for a son-in-law by this time. She has been attacking him ever since I came to St. Clair Park. She can scarcely be called a manœuvrer, for she attacks the fortress in the open sight of day, and lays regular siege to it. She makes me laugh sometimes, in spite of my disgust at

such proceedings. My mother will be here this summer, and then you will see how the matter can be done really in a *lady-like* way, and without any one not in the secret finding it out. Poor, dear, Lord St. Clair, how his proud spirit would rebel if he had any idea he was inveigled into choosing a wife; but, depend upon it, it was so, though I was then too inexperienced to see much into the game.

"I believe with some dowagers this becomes quite a necessity—a kind of gambling for hearts, instead of money; and yet, Heaven knows, hearts seldom enough come into their calculations of a good match. I cannot think how my mother exists, now she has no unmarried daughters to get off her hands; but she is such a decided *amateur* in this line, she volunteers to introduce all her nieces and cousins, who are tolerably handsome; she will delight to try her skill on you; but you need not look so frightened—she does not proceed a-la-Lady

Williamson—she will not mar the impressi
you have already made on this Adonis—
has far too much talent and feminine t
for that; but here we are already wit
sight of home, and I hear the dressing-b
ringing—there is no more time to loi
away—so haste, my dear Clara, haste!"

CHAPTER XI.

"Pace non si ritrova, se non si cerca in Dio."
MORTE A ABEL.

"Ah troppo è ver? quell 'amoroso ardore,
Che altrui scaldò la prima volta il seno,
Mai per età, mai non s' estingue appieno
E un fuoco insiduoso, sotto il cenere ascoso."
IL PRIMO AMORE, Canto XV.

THE Kingsland races were to take place on the following week, and company was now fast pouring into the houses in the neighbourhood, which were generally filled, and some to over-flowing on this occasion. St. Clair Park was one which could accommodate a large party, without any of the squeezing and cramming of the household, that

sometimes takes place at such times, a
a house is made to hold twice the nu
ber it is calculated to do with comfort.

Lady Williamson was one of these squee
ing ladies, and her daughters had always
pay for the pleasure of a large supply
beaux, by being huddled together into t
small dressing-room attached to the
mother's sleeping apartment, where, in t
hottest of summer weather, they had n
only to run the risk of being smothered, b
were thus exposed to the never-to-be-avoid
worrying of their fidgety, though real
kind-meaning, mamma. It was the la
sound they heard at night, and at their fir
réveil in the morning.

Clara had never witnessed the gay a
exhilarating scene of a race-course, a
looked forward with pleasure to the a
proaching festivities. Many of their gues
had already arrived, and, among the numbe
Lord Stoneley, and his daughters.

Clara's acquaintance with these amiab

and accomplished girls had already ripened into friendship, and she looked forward with animated pleasure to a fortnight's sojourn with them in the country, where the opportunities of intimate and friendly intercourse would be unrestrained, and the morning's walk and evening's chat would be uninterrupted. She had found in Lady Charlotte a most companionable mind, and one not engrossed by the frivolities of fashion. Much as she admired the youthful and fascinating beauty of Lady Georgiana, the elder sister was oftener with her, not from any paltry jealousy, but merely because her heart was too much engrossed by love, to have much at the disposal of friendship.

It was refreshing to see amongst the sophisticated and callous hearts of women of fashion, the pure and genuine love of such a mind as Georgiana Selby's, and it was met by corresponding feelings in the happy favoured receiver of so rare a gift.

Captain Macdonald was worthy to excite

and to retain the first devoted attachment of a woman's love. His pursuits, his mind, his principles, were far above those of the generality of fashionable young men; without any display or affectation of superior sanctity, his whole conduct was influenced by that pure morality, which the precepts of religion can alone inspire. Brought up by a pious and amiable mother, he had imbibed from his cradle the deepest veneration for religion, and the lessons taught in early life continued to guide his conduct through all the busy scenes which the world opened before him,—not making him more austere, or less cheerful than the dissipated set who surrounded him, but imbuing his manners with that unvaried kindness and suavity, which spring from genuine benevolence, and his actions with that unvarying honour and rectitude which can alone be depended upon, when springing from fixed religious principles, not the mere varying code of modern honour. On the momentous subject of religion, as well as on

less sacred subjects, there was an entire union of sentiments and feelings; yet was it one seldom discussed between them; it was deemed by each too holy for general converse, and, though sometimes a question was asked and opposing arguments compared, when satisfied their general opinions coincided, they left their more minute sensations, their fears, their contrition, their hopes, to be poured out in privacy before that supreme power which they knew was ever watching over them.

It was religion like this, in its genuine form, guiding the actions, pervading the feelings, and stilling the turbulence of contending passions, that was wanting in the heart of Clara Cameron, and in that of the brilliant Countess of St. Clair.

The one was still withering under the blight of its dearest hopes, and only excited into enjoyment by the forced and dangerous atmosphere of constant variety—the other was seeking exclusively in a life of pleasure that happiness which the world alone can never give, yet to her, who had never known

other and higher sources of felicity the da
ger was not so great as to Clara, who had
fly from the remembrance of all she o
held dear, and who often found that t
draught mingled at the shrine of folly and
fashion, was not sufficiently potent to dea
recollections of the past, to "minister t
mind diseased" and eradicate a rooted s
row.

For her the cup must be drugged w
yet deadlier poison, and with a heart
aching under the blow which laid desol
every fair spring of early love, and darke
and obscured every vision of youtl
happiness, she was now led to seek the d
gerous excitement of *flirtation*, and
satisfied with the general homage which
peculiar beauty met with, she constar
sought to possess the exclusive attentio
some one favoured individual. In a w
the noble energies of her nature were
sinking into the odious character of a c
plete coquette, and she endeavoured to

nuine feelings of her heart, to
he actual gloom which reigned
the feverish glare of a meteor's

ches of character only are here
to be drawn, and not finished
he minor details of Clara's vari-
ers, in some cases really lovers,
e season she spent in London,
entirely omitted.
rst instance, Captain Macdonald's
were mistaken, but they equally
er purpose for the time, and gave
e of excitement, the excitement
the meeting him an object when
ut, the calling forth his admira-
ve for adorning her lovely person.
ontinued to be her mode of exist-
nake *one* and not the world in
e spring of her actions, and the
endeavours to please.
lly can a right, a pure, a noble
thus perverted!

CHAPTER XII.

"Ses grands yeux noirs sont remplis de feu et d'expression; le sourire le plus agréable laisse voir de très-belles dents; son nez est aquilin, son visage ovale, ses sourcils très-marqués, sa taille haute, svelte, et proportionnée; son teint brun est animé des couleurs de la jeunesse et de la santé; sa physionomie, ouverte et franche, quoique un peu melancholique, inspiroit la confiance et l'amitié, au premier abord."

CAROLINE DE LICHTFIELD.

"WE have an addition to our party to-day, who, I think, will be just to your taste, Clara," said Lady St. Clair, "but I warn you, beforehand, not to flirt so unmercifully with him as you do sometimes; for I think he has a heart to feel your charms, though he has not a purse to allow him to ask to become their possessor."

"Do you remember that old ruined place which we passed yesterday in our ride, and that I told you was Merton Castle—that belongs to Cecil Aston, and his fortune is as ruined as his abode. A farmer lives in part of the old building, and at the side which we did not see, he has fitted up two rooms for himself, where he lives. He is doing all he can to cancel the immense debts his father left on the estate; a great part of it is already sold for that purpose, and the remainder is in the clutches of the creditors, who allow him but a scanty pittance for the maintenance of the heir of a once princely fortune—so passes human greatness—if I were given to moralize, or you to like such themes, Clara, here were a fitting subject."

"Oh, spare us both, I beg of you, Contessa, and tell me, rather, what this hero is like, who is situated so romantically in an old ruined castle? Your powers of description, on such a subject, will probably exceed your powers of sermonizing."

"No," replied the Countess, "I will leav
all to your own imagination, which is fertil
enough, methinks; and you may endow hi
with azure eyes, and flaxen hair, or wit
those of an eagle, with raven locks, as be
suits your fancy; and then at dinner,
rather in the 'awful five minutes' prece
ing, you will see how your beau ideal
filled up by reality. You know it is th
same Cecil Aston that Lord St. Clair hop
will be returned for Kingsland, when t
death of the present member leaves a v
cancy; he thinks his talents may help
raise his fallen fortunes, and, at least, th
will be an opening for him to make the a
tempt.

"In the meantime, let us seek the Ladi
Selby, and arrange some tableaux for th
evening. I am tired of nothing but dancin
and music, though we shall have an ab
ally in both, in Cecil Aston. I belie
Ernest Cavendish hates the sight of hi
because he rivals even him in waltzin

You will delight in him for a partner; he will heighten instead of marring your grace, which so frequently happens. It is surely one of the miseries of life to waltz with a man who does not know how, and which I take care never to undergo a second time with the same person; the first time they are taken on trial, and one must expect to be taken in sometimes; but it quite spoils the equilibrium of my temper as well as of my steps.

"But here come the fair ladies in question; now let us fix on some tableaux.

"Clara, I want you to be Corinne, as in that favourite picture of mine in my dressing-room in Grosvenor-square. I have often fancied a strong likeness in the style of beauty to yours. Cecil Aston will make you an excellent Oswald."

"Ah! Countess, you have betrayed the secret I was not to know. Cecil Aston then has an eagle eye and raven locks. I forget the exact description of him by Madame de

Stäel, but this was always my idea of him, and the artist in your picture I know has had the same."

"Then I think both he and you, Clara, alter the author's intention," said Lady Georgiana. "I perfectly remember that Corinne recognises Oswald for an Englishman, among the crowd that were witnessing her triumph in receiving the laurel crown, by the colour of his fair hair, and his tall and noble figure."

"I think," said Lady St. Clair, "that young ladies are apt to embody heroes in romance with the semblance of favourite heroes in real life. Ah! that tell-tale blush owns, in both of you, the truth of what I say. It is not difficult to guess who is the model of manly beauty you copy from, Lady Georgiana; and, in truth, he would be no bad study for an Apollo Belvidere, though he does not quite realize my ideas of Lord Nelville. Whose are the dark eyes you copy from, Clara? Why you blush more and

more, and tears are in your eyes. Pardonatemi Carissima, non ho pensato di dispiacervi."

It was not affectation which frequently led St. Clair to make use of Italian phrases. She had spent much of her early life in Italy, and was so conversant with the soft language of the south, that when any sudden emotion called forth the natural feelings of her heart, the exclamations of surprise, or the words of endearment, unknown almost to herself, clothed themselves in more glowing terms, than the usual coldness of our English phrases admits of. The beautiful expression she would give to the simple term of "mia Carissima," would require a long sentence in English to express, and by those she loved, she liked herself to be addressed by the gentle name of Contessa.

"But let us return to the subject of the tableaux," said Lady St. Clair, in an indifferent tone, though at the same time laying her hand affectionately on Clara's shoulder.

"You, then, shall be Corinne, ar
Aston, Oswald. The picture is take
is returning from the triumphant
which had been paid to her genius
talents, by receiving the crown of la
of myrtle, which was rendered sacre
names of Petrarch and of Tasso;
turns her head unconsciously to loo
for Oswald, and the wreath fallin
around her brow, is replaced by Lord
In this, too, I think the artist has
liberty with the text, Lady Georg
well as in altering the colour of th
hair, for, if I remember right, Mad
Stäel only allows of his giving it he
himself replacing it.

"The dress will not be much tr
you, Clara, for it is only a whi
confined by a blue band round th
and the sleeves looped up, to sh
beauty of the arm. The Indian h
chief which was wound amongst l
tresses, in imitation of the Sybil,

menichino, having been removed, to receive the laurel crown, her hair, 'dark as ebony,' had fallen on her shoulders; all this will suit you admirably, Clara, and I expect you to look the very Corinne of Madame de Stäel. How Cecil Aston will succeed, as the admiring and love-struck Oswald, I know not. Vedremo, carissima.

"I think this shall be our first exhibition, and for our second, I want you, Lady Charlotte, to personate the beautiful though unfortunate Mary, in that picture which is considered the best likeness of her, and where her favoured minstrel is playing some of the lays she loved so much; and I am sure Ernest Cavendish will look this character to perfection.

"For the third and last, you, Lady Georgiana, must be Medora, if you will allow of another inamorato than your own, as Captain Macdonald will never do for the dark and gloomy Conrad. On second thoughts,

though, a Conrad is not wanting, for he only appears quite in the distance.

"'Till, oh! how far, she caught a glimpse of him.'

"I think yours will exactly answer to the description of—

"'The tender blue of that large loving eye.'

"as well as the 'long fair hair' of Medora, which you remember escapes free from restraint—

"'In all the wildness of dishevelled charms.'"

"But why," said Lady Georgiana, "will you not be Medora yourself, my dear Lady St. Clair: I am sure you will enact the whole thing so much better than I shall, and where can be found such beautiful 'long fair hair as this,'" touching the Countess's waving ringlets, which hung in rich luxuriance on her neck. Do let me persuade you."

"Oh! yes," exclaimed Clara, in her own energetic manner, do, Contessa mia, be Medora yourself.

Before she was aware any one had entered the room, she heard her words echoed in the gentle and insinuating accents which Ernest Cavendish knew so well how to assume. "Do, Contessa mia, be Medora yourself." It was the first time he had ever addressed her by the familiar, the almost endearing, term of "Contessa mia," and, though uttered in this playful manner, the most fastidious could not object to it. Clara saw in an instant the advantage he might gain from it, and that thus, in a favourable moment, the ice once broken, he might persevere in a mode of address too peculiar and intimate to be safely ventured on in Lady St. Clair's peculiar circumstances.

"And," continued he, "let me be the Conrad to so beautiful a Medora."

"In the picture I mean no Conrad appears, except quite in the distance, the back-ground,

—and that will not suit you, Mr. Cavendish," said the Countess, with a playful smile.

"Have you then forgotten the picture to which I allude;" he answered in a tone of tender reproach; "have you forgotten our admiring it together, only a few short months ago, at the British Gallery,—mine is a better memory. This picture beautifully embodies the description from which it is taken.

"'She rose, she sprung, she clung to his embrace,
Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden face,
He dared not raise to his that deep blue eye—
That downcast drooped in tearless agony.
Her long fair hair lay floating o'er his arms
In all the wildness of dishevelled charms;
Scarce beat that bosom where his image dwelt,
So full—that feeling seemed almost unfelt.'"

Ernest Cavendish possessed the talent of reciting poetry seldom equalled, and the deep pathos and feeling which he could throw into his voice and manner, reached the very acmé of art, for they appeared to flow spontaneously from the natural impulse of his soul. Perhaps he was never so dangerous, for his own

worldly views were never so entirely con-
cealed as when he recited in a lady's ear
some of the impassioned lines of Byron, or of
Moore. As he now stood with his fine
figure in a reclining posture over Lady St.
Clair's chair, and his eyes, which were gene-
rally too *fier*, softened into unison with the
tender feelings he was reciting, Clara for a
moment hesitated in the severe opinion she
had formed of him, and thought, surely this
man is something better than a heartless
libertine; at least, he has good and generous
feelings, however they may be obscured by
the vices which his situation in life has
fostered.

Lady St. Clair seldom encouraged any
thing which approached to sentiment; she
probably knew that in her situation it was
dangerous ground, and the more she kept to
the realities of life, and eschewed the fairy
realms of romance, the more she could enjoy
the pleasures which, at least, were within her
reach, and ever at the command of rank,

wealth, and beauty. It is true, she was young when she accepted her present lot in life, but as it was chosen for her, and she entered upon it willingly, she was determined to find in it her happiness, and not quarrel with the blessings she possessed, because perhaps she might have preferred them of a different character.

With her, the luxuries which surrounded her station in life, had become absolutely essential to her comfort, and, whatever nature had intended her for, she was now the last person in the world to have any taste for love and a cottage.

Ernest Cavendish deceived himself in thinking he had made some impression on the heart of the beautiful Countess, and she was never more on her guard against the approaches of any thing beyond admiration, than at this moment, when he flattered himself she would yield to his desire of enacting a picture which would require the most tender looks of love on his part, and at least a

passive return on hers, and he was congratulating himself on this public exhibition of his power over her, when she at once cut short his presumptive hopes, by coldly remarking—

"I perfectly remember the picture to which you allude, Mr. Cavendish, and I thought it extremely beautiful; nevertheless, it will not suit our present purpose, at least not mine, which is to show my face, not hide it, so I shall keep to my original plan of depicting Medora immediately after the scene you have quoted.

"'And is he gone?—on sudden solitude
How oft that fearful question will intrude,
'Twas but an instant past, and here he stood!
And now, without the portal's porch she rush'd
And then at length her tears in freedom gush'd,
Big—bright—and fast unknown to her they fell;
But still her lips refused to send, 'farewell.'
For in that word, that fatal word—howe'er,
We promise, hope, believe,—there breathes despair.
O'er every feature of that still, pale face
Had sorrow fixed, what time can ne'er erase.
The tender blue of that large loving eye
Grew frozen with its gaze on vacancy;

'Till—oh how far! it caught a glimpse of him—
And then it flowed,—and frenzied seemed to swim
Through those long, dark, and glistening lashes dew'd
With drops of sadness oft to be renew'd;
He's gone!—against her heart that hand is driven,
Convuls'd and quick—then gently raised to heaven.'

"There young ladies, you see I can quot Lord Byron, as well as Mr. Cavendish, an as you all wish, I will try what I can do i this picture myself, albeit I am not muc given to the pathetic. As I am to appea it shall be first, that I may have time t rejoin my company. You are all suc adepts in the art of tableaux, I need give yo no hints on the subject; and I hope alt gether we shall make up some represents tions really worth looking at."

CHAPTER XIII.

"Go, follow the breeze that flows over the sea
Go, fasten the rainbow's dyes,
Go whistle the bird from yonder tree,
Or catch on the waves the sparkles that rise,
This to do, thou shalt easier find
Than to know the thoughts of a woman's mind.

"A sage who had that look espied,
Where kindling passion strove with pride,
Had whispered, "Prince beware!
From the chafed tiger rend his prey,
Rush on the lion when at bay,
Bar the fell dragon's blighted way,
But shun that lovely snare!"

THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

As the dressing-bell summoned Clara to her toilette, she met Lady St. Clair on the stairs, who stopped her with the words—

"Do not put on any favourite dress to-day, for Lady Williamson and many of our country neighbours dine here, and she will be sure to seize upon it as a pattern for her daughters, if it is any thing possible for them to copy, and then you can never appear in it again. The fate of my own poor dress is fresh in my remembrance, so take warning. When we meet in the drawing-room, we shall see which takes the most effectual means of not being made use of as a milliner's doll."

Clara's costume was soon decided upon, for she thought what was perfectly free from ornament was the least likely to suit either Lady Williamson's taste or her daughters' figures. She and Lady St. Clair often assumed a style of dress which suited themselves, though it might not be exactly the same as the reigning fashion: thus there was an air of elegance and taste in the simple white muslin robe she now selected, and being different from any other in the

room, gave her the appearance of superior fashion. Her hair was dressed with accordant simplicity, and merely ornamented with a single white water-lily, which she had gathered in a walk in the park, and now placed in the Grecian plait at the back of her head.

As she turned from her glass to descend to the drawing-room, she could not but feel perfectly satisfied with the beautiful and classical form there reflected. The affectionate Janet was loud in her praise, and, as she proudly gazed on the lovely being she had brought up from infancy, exclaimed:—

"There will not be so bonny a face as that in all the large party, Miss Violette tells me, there is to be to-day: at first I was rather vexed when you chose this plain white muslin to appear among so many fine people, but now I am quite satisfied; there wants no gold and diamonds for those bright eyes, or feathers and flowers for that

shining black hair, or satin or lace for that white neck, or —"

But Clara staid to hear no more, but kindly saying, "Hush, hush, my good Janet, you forget how vain I shall be with all these compliments," and, with the parting smile still on her lips, she entered the drawing-room.

The majority of the party had now arrived, but not all, for country visitors are seldom very punctual, having bad roads and a difference in clocks to plead in excuse. Lady St. Clair introduced Miss Cameron to a favoured few of her guests, and having spoken or curtseyed to the others whom she knew, she turned to a table, where the Ladies Selby, aided by Captain Macdonald, were good-naturedly showing the Miss Williamsons and Miss Mountaine, whom we have already introduced to our readers, some new prints.

Clara soon wearied of her situation, and, seeing the Miss Williamsons engaged with

a book of French patterns, which seemed more to their taste than anything else, every one naturally preferring the subject they are most conversant with, and these young ladies seemed adepts in what stitch this pattern must be worked, which would be easy and which difficult, and which would have a good effect when done—mysteries in which they found Clara profoundly ignorant—gladly turned to rest her eyes on the beautiful form of Lady St. Clair, who had chosen a style of dress the very reverse of Clara's, and which would be as much above being copied as hers might be thought beneath it.

The splendour of her dress and the brilliance of her jewels might have vied with those of an eastern sultana, while the bandeau of pink topazes which sparkled on her brow would have ill accorded with one of less delicate whiteness, or of less perfect form.

Clara's eyes were fixed upon her with affectionate admiration, when she saw her

evidently one of the part
the house.

He was tall, almost to a fault, evidently a gentleman, there wa in his address which told he hac in the country than in the poli of London aristocracy. His c was handsome, and there was melancholy in his large dark ey the smile which played over a peculiar beauty, which rendered gether a very interesting lookin With none of the air *distinguée* whi Ernest Cavendish, who was stand the Countess, he was much mor and equally gentlemanly looking.

As Clara was taking this surv

Clara was by this time too much used to admiration to be embarrassed or surprised at receiving it; but it was so unequivocally expressed in the earnest gaze of Cecil Aston, that for a moment she lost her self-possession, and was even glad of the relief of turning to address Mrs. Mountaine, who sat beside her, and whom she found as blooming in appearance and as weak in nerves as when she overturned the camellas in Lady St. Clair's conservatory. The natural redness of her coarse complexion was set off to advantage by an immense turban of delicate primrose-coloured gauze, with a white rose almost buried among the stiff *crêpe* curls of an auburn wig.

"You seem to enjoy excellent health, Miss Cameron," drawled out the interesting invalid, looking at the heightened colour on Clara's cheek; "you are indeed to be envied: what are all the other blessings of life without health to enjoy them; but, alas!" and she sighed so deeply that the large pearl

cross which adorned her "bosom's throne," rose almost to touch her panting lips, "alas! even had I good health, this susceptible heart,"—laying a large fat hand, which had burst through the trammels of a French kid glove, upon the part—"this sensitive heart would always mar my repose."

"Yes, Mrs. Mountaine," said Ernest Cavendish, in a tone of mock pathos, "you say right, feeling in a sensitive gentle breast,

> 'Is bliss but to a certain bound—
> Beyond 'tis agony.' "

"Oh, Mr. Cavendish, how pleasant it is to hear you talk thus—what a relief from the cruelties of hunting which so generally meet my ear!"

They were at this moment interrupted by the spare figure of her husband, Colonel Mountaine, who kept the county subscription hounds, and whose language was often that heard near his dog-kennel, passing

hastily by them, exclaiming, "Sus, sus, sus!" and a general move in the room told that dinner was announced.

It was a rule with Ernest Cavendish never to pay attention to an unmarried woman; thus he left Cecil Aston to the undisturbed possession of Miss Cameron's hand, to lead her in to dinner, and went in search of the next handsomest married woman in the room after Lady St. Clair, whom the rules of society gave to the man of highest rank in the room, who chanced to be a stupid old Marquis of seventy, who thought more of a good dinner than of the beautiful companion by his side.

Clara was seated at table, so that no obstruction intervened to break Cecil Aston's undivided attention. One of the Miss Williamson's was on his other side, and too much delighted with the conversation of an officer in the 30th Regiment, which was stationed in the neighbourhood, who had the reputation of a large fortune,

to waste a thought on the poor and penniless Cecil Aston, who would be any thing but a good match. The one was cast in nature's finest mould, and the other scarcely escaped passing for a monkey, whose features his resembled far more than the "human face divine. "But what did this signify to the calculating Lady Williamson, or her well initiated daughters?

Clara's other neighbour was a jovial fox-hunting country squire, who was only intent on the delicacies of Lord St. Clair's famous French cook, and in talking to Colonel Mountaine, across the table, on the subjects of hounds and horses.

It was rather a relief when he found Cecil Aston relieved him from any necessity of attempting to amuse Miss Cameron; and she very willingly gave herself up to the charm of his undivided attentions, which, joined to an animated flow of sensible conversation, made the time pass so unusually

fast, that the other ladies had risen from their seats before she had any notion that the prescribed limit for favouring the gentlemen with their company had arrived.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Not accept the best match in all the country round!
Why, child, you would be mad outright!"
OLD PLAY.

"So she gave him her hand, though her heart it said 'nay.'"

I FEAR my heroine is rather a selfish one, that is, she had lived enough in the world to perceive that each sought his own amusement; and as hers certainly did not consist in sympathizing with Mrs. Mountaine's shattered nerves, in talking of patterns and the newest fashions, with one of the Miss Williamsons, or in hearing all kinds of prescriptions for all kinds of complaints from the other; in which she was joined by

her officious mother, who never lost an opportunity of dilating on the gentle humanity of one daughter—who physicked every sick cottager in the parish—or the notable fingers and beautiful taste of the other, who had the economy to superintend the making of all her own dresses at home, she very quietly went into her own dressing-room, and was luxuriantly reclining in an easy chair, sipping a cup of coffee which she had desired to be brought her, when the Countess came in on her return from her boudoir.

"Now fie, my dear Clara, how can you be so ill-natured as to leave me all the trouble of amusing and talking to our country neighbours?"

"Really, Contessa, you know I never can *faire l'agréable* as you do; and besides, as I am not *la maîtresse de la maison, qu' importe*, no one will observe I am not drinking my coffee with the others, instead of this delicious repose here."

"Yes, yes they will, Clara; and besides,

I wish you to be popular here; you
your home is to be not far off?"

"Ah, Contessa, you need not fear fo
popularity, then," laughingly replied (
"The mistress of Eastham Court will
lack admirers; she will have too
amusement in her power to bestow ev
dread any failure in attention. Think
a splendid place it is for balls and
querades, and all the fêtes ever invent
this fête-giving age. Why old fussy
Williamson will then be ready to fall
and worship me, and Mrs. Mountaine
sigh the gentlest wishes for my happ
from her capacious heart."

"But I do not think, Contessa, I
accept Sir James, if he does ever ask
he is so very tiresome and stupid.
could I ever drag on existence with hi

An unusual cloud passed over the Co
ess's clear brow, as she replied with
asperity than her gentle voice often assu
"Nonsense, nonsense, Clara—do not

like a foolish romantic girl of sixteen. How do I pass my life? what can be more brilliant, more recherchée, than all my pleasures, what less palling than the constant round of amusements which attend me. Depend upon it, 'Love and a Cottage,' or rather love and a ruined castle, which with Cecil Aston is now running in your head, would tire a great deal sooner, and *then* you would have no resource; if you were tired and ennuyé, you must go on being so, even to the end of your life. Now in the splendid halls of Eastham Court, or in your magnificent house in Grosvenor-square, every variety of delight would await you—when one palled, another might be tried, and so on, through all the endless round of pleasures.

"Come, cheer up, this world is anything but stupid, credetemi carissima; we will be friendly, though rival queens, and rule it together, that is the world of fashion, which is all the world we care anything about.

"But we must not stay here any longer.

The gentlemen, or at least the young and ga lant, will soon join us, and then we wi begin the tableaux. Let me tell you it i high time to rejoin our company, and ve indecorous to stay longer here."

As arm-in-arm the fair relatives entere the drawing-room, there could scarcely b found a more beautiful contrast than thei appearance presented. The dazzling whit ness of Lady St. Clair's complexion wa relieved, rather than equalled by the delicat folds of her white satin dress, and the pal pure pink of the topazes which sparkled o her arms, neck, and forehead, the full an fine contour of her form being admirabl shown in the disposal of her graceful dr pery.

There was a total want of ornament i Clara's simple attire; but this very simpl city, joined to the rather fanciful manner i which it was arranged, gave her as distingu an appearance as that of the Countess.

They were surprised to find only one ge

tleman in the drawing-room, and that one an addition to their party in the person of Sir James Eastham, the so recent subject of their conversation. This, and his unexpected appearance, gave an unusual glow to Clara's cheek, as she found her little hand in his powerful squeeze, after that of the Countess had undergone a similar thraldom. Perhaps the Baronet put a more favourable construction to his wishes on this circumstance than it deserved, for certain it is, from this moment his attentions became of a more decided character, and so unlike his usual nonchalance, that no doubt could be felt of his intentions to make Clara the envied liege lady of his love, or rather of his domains.

But we forestall our tale, and must listen to the Baronet's excuse for not reaching St. Clair Park in time for dinner, that he had been detained at Newmarket by the illness of a favourite race-horse, and that it required four horses at their utmost speed, and tra-

velling all night, to bring him here now—but with such an inducement (and he glanced at Clara) he was determined to come.

Lady St. Clair smiled approval, and, bidding Clara listen to the tale of his Newmarket Races, instead of herself, as she must prepare for her "exhibition," as she called it, left them seated on a Turkish ottoman, only made for the happy number of *two*, and which defied all sharers in a sociable or tender *tête a tête*.

Clara was thus seated, very quietly listening to an account of one of Sir James's horses having won this race, and another lost that, when Cecil Aston entered the room, and, with a lowering disappointed look, saw her thus apparently deep in conversation, little dreaming of the unromantic theme which claimed her attention.

Men must make love according to their natures; and while the sentimentalist sighs of romance and poetry, and all the witchery of song, the pedant clothes his ideas in the

language of the ancients, and descants on philosophy and the literature of bye-gone ages; the politician raves of contending parties and conflicting arguments, and each thinks to be most eloquent on the subject most interesting to himself. What wonder that Sir James Eastham was endeavouring to amuse the chosen mistress of his heart with an account of his horses, or his dogs?

The party gradually drew themselves into groups, that most agreeable liberty of numbers either in town or the country, though perhaps some were as ill assorted by nature as Sir James and Clara. Certainly, Cecil Aston and Lady Williamson were "paired, not matched," when she seized upon his arm to adjourn to the music-room, where the lights and all the paraphernalia *pour faire les tableaux* were arranged, and it was announced that the picture of Medora was ready for inspection.

Lady Williamson was one of those manœuvring mammas who make it not only

a part of their diplomacy to attract eligibl acquaintance for their daughters, but als act on the defensive, and think it almo equally important to keep "detrimentals as they are called, out of the way. It wa for this weighty reason she fidgetted up t Cecil Aston, and seized upon his arm, thoug he was perfectly guiltless of intending t offer it to her eldest daughter, who wa beneficently prescribing for a violent hea ache he complained of.

The softened lights in the music-roo cast a gentle subdued brightness over i rose-coloured draperies, and as a velvet cu tain rose at the further end of the room, seemed almost enchantment which appeare so perfect and so beautiful was the illusio

Nothing could be more statue-like tha Lady St. Clair's attitude, or do mo justice to the poet's description of Medor So true is it, that expression is more tha feature in a face, that few who knew th

brilliant Countess only in her mirthful moods, could have recognised her bright countenance in the rigid expression of despair it had now assumed—it was the most consummate beauty still, but in a perfectly different style. There was something so pathetic, so touching, in the mourning figure before her, that Clara could not restrain her tears, and even Sir James exclaimed, that, by Jove, it was wonderfully well done, though he was glad the lovely actress did not generally look so woebegone.

When the murmurs of applause were dying away among the spectators, the curtain fell, and the Countess soon returned in her former dress and smiles among her guests, to share with them the pleasure of the succeeding tableaux, represented by Clara and the ladies Selby.

The whole thing went off with great *éclat*, though perhaps the picture of Medora was

the most perfect delusion, for once a
half lurked on the lips of the unfort
Mary, which the artist had not placed
and a blush was seen to irradiate the
brow of Corinne, as she received the l
crown from the hands of the adm
Oswald.

It would be a curious study of h
nature to follow the now admiring g
into the privacy of their own carriag
they returned from St. Clair Park, c
more select few who congregated a
their dressing-room fires when they sep
for the night; and to hear the different
which fell from their so recently adu
lips.

The attitude which was openly prono
"so charming," was now transforme
"an odious piece of affectation;" an
whole performance, which had been
such a "delightful break into the mon
of country visiting," was now turned

a "dreadful piece of display," "an alarming precedent for exciting vanity and coquetry," "an alarming example for wives and daughters."

So much for sincerity!

CHAPTER XV.

One of the fathers, if I am rightly informed, l
a woman to be, 'an animal that delights in
THE SP

THE period of the Kingsland ra
arrived, and great were the prep
which had been made by both high
for this annual gala week. From
tage maiden to the great Duchess o
land, all were arrayed in their
ribbons or gayest feathers, and all t
try milliners in the neighbourhood l
plying their needles for many a we
in various styles of paraphernalia,
festive scene.

None of the country-houses within reach of this far-famed meeting brought a fuller or more brilliant assemblage of fashion than St. Clair Park, to grace the ball-room, or to enliven the race-course and the ladies' stand, that charming rendezvous for pretty speeches and quiet flirtations, where all is in such an agreeable confusion and squeeze, that no one can very easily remark what his neighbour is doing.

I say *very easily*, for there are eyes that can pry through every thing, and perhaps no where more on the alert to spy out a little scandal, than at a country re-union, such as Kingsland races.

It was on the morning of the first ball, and when each had retired to put on his stockcloth, or adjust her bonnet, before setting off for the race-course, that Lady St. Clair entered Clara's dressing-room, with a red morocco case in her hand, and, followed by Violette, carrying the most beautiful ball-dress ever imagined by the Goddess of

Fashion, or executed even by the far-fam
Madame * * * herself.

"What an exquisite dress!" exclaim
Clara; "but which then of the two th
arrived yesterday, do you mean to discar
—there are but two ball-nights, are there

"This is not for me, Carissima," repli
the Countess; "look at the sylph-like c
tour of the waist, and you will know wh
only it can encircle—certainly, not mi
This is for your own fair self, and a li
galanterie on the part of Lord St. Clair
his niece, though I claim to myself so
taste in ordering its materials, &c.; nev
theless, I must own Madame * * * ma
very fairy-like habiliments, even when
entirely to herself; and this certainly i
chef d'œuvre. You may go now, Violet
and prepare my toilette for the races.

"And now that we are alone, my d
Clara, let me, with a kiss, offer you my o
little gift for your appearance to-night—
little I need not call it, for these orname

disgrace you when you are Lady
, and in possession of all those fine
s." And, opening the red morocco-
plendid set of emeralds were dis-

s were not given me on my mar-
Lord St. Clair, with the rest of
lery you see me wear, or I should
t liberty to dispose of them, even
ce, but were sent me by a rich old
unt of my own, who had, as you
ose, no taste in dress, to choose
for a fair complexion—they make
hastly and dreadful—I never wore
once, and that was abroad, so
will know them even to have
, and you cannot thus be accused
g 'my cast off things.' They
our dark and clear brilliant com-
actly. Do look at the effect of
ling bandeau on your raven hair:
eautiful?"
nay, no nonsense, wear them for

my sake. I feel, too, some personal pride in seeing you the admired of all beholders, which I am sure you will be to-night. But here come the carriages. Violette will think me lost, and not have half the time she will wish for to adjust 'mon chapeau a ravir.' I suppose you call Janet to assist you for form's sake, for I am sure her awkward Scotch fingers have nothing to do with the tasteful arrangement of your bonnet, which I believe even satisfies Violette's Parissienne taste. It is astonishing how few English women know how to put on a bonnet."

Clara was delighted with the gay scene on the race-course. As Lady St. Clair's splendid equipage drawn by four beautiful bays, and attended by two out-riders, also a perfect match, took several turns on the race-course, it was no wonder they attracted every eye, even without the display of beauty it contained. Several other carriages followed, with the rest of the party;

and, as they entered the Grand Stand, many an envious female eye was turned on the taste of their dress and the beauty of their figures.

The shrill voice of the Duchess of Kingsland was the first to be recognised; and, after due greetings passed, Lady St. Clair was fain to relieve her ears by the more dulcet tones of her companions, to say nothing of the gentle and insinuating ones of Ernest Cavendish, who was ever at her side. Happily, the Countess was aware of the publicity of her situation; and, seeing that the sharp eyes of Lady Williamson were fixed upon her, "taking notes," she adroitly drew Cecil Aston forward to share her conversation; and, at the same time, left Clara's side for the attentions of Sir James Eastham, who she saw making his way from off the course.

Clara caught a glance of her eye, and, following its direction, she saw the Miss Williamsons and several other young ladies

fidgetting to get in a good situation for at least securing the Baronet for a few minutes' conversation.

The spirit of coquetry was awakened, and Clara felt sure, by a look she could bring him to her side. For a moment she hesitated, but the love of triumph conquered; and, meeting his eye as he entered the door, though a bevy of fair damsels were endeavouring to stop his passage, in another minute he was by her, with the frank and hearty hand-shaking which the custom of the country authorised.

She knew character too well to suppose that even she could long retain the attentions of a thorough sportsman, apart from the amusement which was going on and her corner-seat in the front row of the stand was the very one Sir James would have chosen for his station in watching the races, even without her influence in detaining him there.

She adroitly entered into his interest i

what was going forward; and with her natural love of horses, joined to her wish of being agreeable, she watched the race with an eagerness almost equalling his own; and her eyes sparkled with unfeigned delight when his favourite came in first, making her appear more beautiful than ever in Sir James's eyes; and he began to think that really a woman could be a pleasant companion.

To prove the truth of his thoughts, he never left her side during the rest of the races, initiating her into all the mysteries of which horse would win, and finally ended by offering his arm when Lady St. Clair's carriage was announced, an attention he was never seen guilty of before; and many were the scowls of mammas, who had tried in vain to attract him by the various charms and accomplishments of their daughters.

Everybody has doubtless seen a race-ball, therefore no description need be given beyond a few brief sketches.

Again the party from St. Clair Park

of Gravordale's stomacher,
monds and rubies; and the
begirt with jewellery, which
head of the Duchess of King

The natives had had thei
fore Lady St. Clair entered th
she appeared leaning on Ceci
long and untiring would have
fixed upon her, had not Clar
by her uncle; who, desirous
the Kingslandites in favour
for their new member, obligi
round of speaking to all h
though his manners might
rather too apparently conde
fair companion contrived t
what was most likely to give

Brown, &c., &c.; till Lord St. Clair said she really rivalled her aunt in making the agreeable.

In the meantime, the Countess was following the same line with Cecil Aston, and introducing him to those he did not already know; his manly beauty gained with the ladies, as much as hers did with the gentlemen; and, when he asked the youngest Miss Quirk to dance, his triumph was complete.

Sir James Eastham was deep in his betting-book and the Racing Calendar with a host of gentlemen, but, on seeing Miss Cameron standing with her uncle, talking to Lady Williamson and her daughters, he hastened in that direction. The Miss Williamsons vainly hoped they were the attraction, but when he asked Clara to join the quadrille then forming, an attention he so rarely showed to any one, their hopes fell, and it seemed their next best manœuvre to pay their devoirs to her, who already, in their

Clara had never looked n
on this night. The bande
given that morning by her
round her dark tresses, wl
classic bands, imparted to her
a Grecian statue, and suite
general style of her dress, wl
costly materials, was of sim
set off to advantage the per
of her figure.

Her partner looked no undi
ration, and the glow of gr
flushed her cheek as passing
with a smile, who was tal
Duchess of Kingsland, she to
the quadrille then forming.

It has been already said, that Clara was too prone to encourage the dangerous excitement of an exclusive admiration, and, though her heart told her she had no love to give in return, yet she had not the strength of mind, or the right principle, call it which you will, to check the growth of it in another, when she found that other agreeable, and able for the time, in some degree, to fill with his attentions and assiduity the void which was ever aching at her heart.

But she almost trembled when she thought what might be the effect of blighted love on such a mind as Cecil Aston's, and felt how deep ought to be her reproach who could call forth the ardent feelings of his nature, and then cast him back on a world which had no smiles of fortune to offer, but where the whole unimpaired vigour of his manly mind was wanted to wrestle with the difficulties that surrounded him. Should she thicken those difficulties, by sending him forth with blighted hopes

[illegible] universal attention, in spite of the [illegible] which glittered on the Marchioness of [illegible]'s stomacher, worked in diamonds and rubies; and the nodding plumes begirt with jewellery, which decked the erect head of the Duchess of Kingsland.

The natives had had their stare out before Lady St. Clair entered the room, and, as she appeared leaning on Cecil Aston's arm, long and unwinking would have been the gaze fixed upon her, had not Clara followed, led by her uncle; who, desirous to propitiate the Kingslandites in favour of Cecil Aston for their new member, obligingly went the round of speaking to all he knew, and though his manners might be thought rather too apparently condescending, his fair companion contrived to gloss over what was most likely to give offence; and following the lesson given her by Lady St. Clair, she talked learnedly to the blue Miss Quirk of the newest fashion to the would-be-beauty; of her children, to Mr

few minutes of her company before they left the rooms.

Accordingly, on returning to the ball-room, they intentionally met, and as Lady Stavordale was closely surrounded by her own family, her husband and his two sisters, an introduction inevitably took place.

The Marquis was cast in the very stiffest of aristocratic moulds, but nature had strangely contradicted herself in some of his proportions. He was short and upright to complete unbendingness,—he had long arms and little crooked legs. His hair was an ashy white, and his eyes were fiery; his mouth and a good set of teeth, were the only good points in his appearance, but from thence issued a voice so similar in tone to that of his mother, that this very advantage was lost, for who would wish a second time to have it opened?

His sisters, Lady Jemima, and Lucy Kingsland, were singularly like each other—with unmeaning faces, not easy to describe,

and nothing remarkable but the extre
redness of their hair, which they end
voured to cool by the icy hauteur of th
manners.

From such a circle, we need not wond
that poor Lady Stavordale would glad
escape. Releasing her arm from that of h
husband, she placed it in Clara's, saying s
wished to speak to Lady St. Clair, who w
at the opposite side of the room.

She was frankly received by the kin
Countess, and asked to take a seat besi
her, which she timidly accepted, looking fir
for approval to her liege Lord, or rather h
august mother, whose will was law to tha
all. Relieved and almost surprised at t
unusual event of a smile of assent to h
wishes, she gave herself up to the pleasa
converse which surrounded her, and look
another being to what she was when encirc
by the cold, chill beings, who generally we
her only companions.

"Do you never dance, Lady Stavordale

said the Countess. I think I have never seen you leave your seat, or the Marquis's arm to night: truly, he is a very Lothario of a husband, and plays the lover yet.

The dark cheek of the Marchioness blushed at the different motives the same actions might spring from, for she now knew full well that love had little to do with the vigilant watch her husband kept over her, or the keen espionage of the Duchess.

Married when a mere child, into a family which looked down upon her while they wanted her money, she was only tolerated when under their own eye, and carefully secluded from betraying her little knowledge of the world, or of fashionable life. But though not born of noble blood, she had noble feelings in her heart, and had much oftener cause to blush for their littleness of mind, than they for her ignorance of *les usages de la societé.*

Lady St. Clair had never seen so much of her young neighbour before, as in these ten

minutes' conversation apart from the surveillance of her husband's family, and she could not but sigh for the weary destiny of one who seemed capable of better things. When speaking as now, without restraint, the langour of her full dark eye vanished, and sparkled with the brilliancy of girlhood.

She was enjoying with Clara, some good-natured critiques on the mixture of figures before them, when suddenly a gloom passed over her laughing features, and her companion ceased to wonder at the sudden change when she saw the Duchess crossing the apartment to join them.

Lady St. Clair would have made room for her beside them, but, with a stately bend, she said she could not stay then, but hoped to meet again at the next ball; their carriages were waiting, and she did not think it good taste to stay long at these mixed assemblies.

"Ah," said the smiling Countess, "you

are no dancer, or you would not say that I have several waltzes yet to enjoy, before I think of returning; and, unless Lady Stavordale's eyes belie her, she, too, is of my way of thinking."

"Oh, you quite mistake," screeched her Grace; "Lady Stavordale never waltzes. Come, Theresa, we must be going," and with affected cordiality she held out the fingers of her skinny hand, while Lady Stavordale with real warmth and *empressement* bade them good night.

"Poor girl, how I do pity her," said Clara, as she watched the august party leave the ball-room, and the Marchioness turned her head for a parting smile, unseen by her stately companions.

But pity was soon lost in the mazes of the waltz, and the sun was rising brightly e'er the St. Clair party returned to the park.

CHAPTER XVI.

"No argument like matter of fact is;
And we are best of all led to
Men's principles by what they do."
HUDIBRAS—Part 2; Canto

THE solemn grandeur of a stately almost silent breakfast was yet going o Kingaland House, when a note was bro in for the Duke, to which the messe requested to have an answer.

"Tell him to wait," said the Duke, i querulous tone which a fit of the always seems to authorise; "it is very I cannot eat my breakfast in peace;

always tormented by somebody. Give it the Duchess—I dare say she can answer it for me."

After reading the note, the Duchess shrieked in her most discordant key, "How very provoking it is, Duke, that you are sure to have the gout, if there is the least occasion for your being active. Now at any other time you might have been wheeled about in that chair as long as you liked."

"As I *liked*," growled the impatient goutée; "if you suppose I *like* to sit here, you are much mistaken let me tell you. But what is the matter now?"

"Why Mr. Danvers is dead at last, and we must begin a canvass for William Henry directly. It is ten chances to one but the Kingsland people are offended at your being seen at neither the races nor the balls, and will say it is all pride. Now the St. Clair party are making themselves popular by the gusto with which they enter into these amusements. I really wish, as it happens,

we had staid a little later at the ball last night; and I think, William Henry, it would be more politic if you danced a little."

"Begging your pardon, Madam, I must differ in opinion there; if I danced a little I must a great deal, or give yet more offence. No, no, that would be buying a seat in Parliament too dear. Besides I am not at all sure that in appearing to stand aloof from what a certain set in Kingsland call "the vanities of the world," we are not enrolling a very powerful party on our side However, as you think the contrary, and that I must be *danced* into Parliament, I see no objection that Theresa should do it for me. She seems to have got up a wonderful liking for the St. Clairs and the beautiful niece, for beautiful I must own her to be, though devilish conceited, and, as my father's gout has prevented your having any party here, I see no reason she might not join theirs the next ball-night, and exhibit as a dancer, as you think it will pleas-

the Kingslandites. It seems to me desirable at least to appear on cordial terms with the St. Clairs. I cannot but see they are extremely popular, and it might help me on a little. I wish, by Jove, I had a handsome wife, or sisters either, to canvass for me."

The Ladies Kingsland were proof against ill-natured remarks, and being "all in the family," they could return them if desirable, but Lady Stavordale's eyes, which had brightened at the unusually agreeable prospect held out to her of joining Lady St. Clair's lively party, now filled with tears, as she gently said, "Indeed, my dear Lord, I am very sorry I cannot help you, but I am sure our boy is beautiful enough to canvass for you—let me take him with me and try."

"Nonsense, nonsense, Theresa: who ever heard of a baby being anything but a bore?"

"I hope, brother," said Lady Jemima, "you will not expect us to stay late at the next ball; if you and Lady Stavordale choose to do so, for as we have no party for us to

"Surely," screeched the n
might find some eligible pa
room, if you did not look so cc
ling that no one dare come ne
the gentlemen staying at St. C
unexcepti onable. Why won
with Mr. Cavendish?"

"Dance with Ernest Cave
claimed both sisters at once; "s
body knows he never speaks
married women."

"Well, well," said the baffl
"there are plenty of others bes
only mentioned him by chance.
Eastham, the best match in th
saw was *twice* Miss Cameron's

coquettes," said Lady Lucy; "I never saw any thing more glaring than Miss Cameron's search for admiration; why all the gentlemen in the room were hovering around her, and in the stand she never let Sir James Eastham leave her once—poor man, I believe he is fairly caught."

"I see no reason you have to pity him, Lucy," said the Marquis, "it is no hard fate to have the handsomest woman in England for a wife; his is a devilish deal worse case who is tied to the ugliest."

"But, Duchess," interposed his Grace, "you forget that all this time my note is unanswered. Write and ask our agent to dine here to-day, when we can talk the election matters over; we must be civil to such people sometimes."

Leaving the family circle at Kingsland House, we turn to a very different one at St. Clair Park, where the gay spirit of its mistress inspired life and gaiety in all

The late breakfast had been so much prolonged by cheerful and amusing conversation, that it was nearly time to prepare for the races, which this day began earlier than the preceding one, before they rose from the table.

"My dear Gertrude," said the Earl, "I wish you would trust Mr. Aston to drive you in your pony-phaëton on the race-course to-day; hoping for no objection, I have ventured to order its being in readiness; for now that the expected vacancy in the representation of Kingsland has actually taken place, and the election must soon come on, I think it might aid the cause we all have at heart, if we showed the good people of Kingsland that Mr. Aston has our warmest interest and support."

"Surely," said the Countess, "I will, with pleasure, accept Mr. Aston as my charioteer, and right glad shall I be in any way to forward his canvass. I will regale his ears, on the road, with the success Clara and I have already had in his cause."

A flash of gratified pride crossed Cecil Aston's brow as he bowed his thanks; but the bow was for Lady St. Clair, the look and blush of pleasure for Clara.

"Alas!" thought the conscious girl, "this must not go on. I cannot, I will not, allure such a heart as that to seek a love I have not now to give. I will not call forth the buds of hope only to be crushed and blighted."

Full of virtuous resolves for eschewing flirtation, at least with Cecil Aston, she went to her wardrobe to select its most becoming dress.

Yet another scene, of a different character, waits for a hasty sketch in the Borough town of Kingsland, on this eventful morning, where the news has spread like wild-fire of the death of their late respected member, Mr. Danvers. The locale is one which ought to be sacred to all the kindly charities of life, for it is the vicarage of Kingsland, and the residence of the consecrated

minister of religion, where all that is gentle and all that is of good report ought to shed its benign influence.

Mr. Rugeley was past the middle age, and had left the ascetic life of a Fellow of a College to take possession of the living of Kingsland. Soured with a long procrastination of his hopes of preferment, which tiring out the patience of his affiancée, had given her, a few years previously, to the arms of a rival suitor, he entered on the duties of a parish priest with blighted hopes, and viewing the world at large with distrust and suspicion.

Every thing assumed the gloomy hue of his own morbid feelings, every thing was wrong, every thing was wicked beyond the pale of his own peculiar opinions, and, assuming a tone of superior sanctity, he scrupled not to send others of milder and happier sentiments, at once without the pale of salvation. He met with a few disappointed spinsters, already of a certain age,

and with whom the pleasures of the world were either palling on their senses, or flitting from their grasp, ready to join in his anathemas against amusements they could no longer enjoy, and society which shunned their advances.

He had long finished his early and solitary breakfast, when a knock at the door, at an unwonted hour for visitors, called him from the concoction of a work he was preparing for press, entitled, "The Danger of the Church in a Profligate Generation," and Miss Brierly was ushered into his presence.

"Oh, my dear sir!" said the spinster, "now is the time for the saints to be up and stirring themselves. The Lord has shown himself merciful unto his Church, and has been pleased to remove a stumbling-block and cause of offence to his chosen, in this perverse and idolatrous generation. Our wicked ministry have lost one of their supporters, and Mr. Danvers is at last taken from committing further evil in this world, to his reward in the next."

"The Lord's name be praised!" exclaimed Mr. Rugeley, clasping his hands, and raising his eyes till only the whites could be seen. "But tell me, Miss Brierly, what can be done on the part of the elect? God knows I meant no wicked pun, but how can we secure the electors of Kingsland, to support the righteous cause? Your sex is cunning in devices, and may be your brother, who is agent to the good and pious Duke of Kingsland, may aid us with his counsel. Let us be up and seek him!"

"The very thing, my dear sir, I came to ask. My brother is even now praying for assistance from above to compose some strongly-worded and powerful handbills and placards, to be distributed and posted without delay through the town. Yours, my dear sir, is a sharp and searching pen, truly mingled with gall; he begs your assistance in his holy undertaking."

"Willingly, willingly, my dear sister in the faith, will I give my feeble strength to

this Christian work, and may the Lord bless and fructify our endeavours! Truly his hand is seen most providentially in the work, for on Sunday next the great—and truly may he be called great, among the zealous for the truth—on Sunday next, the great Mr. Macnamara is to fill my pulpit, to comfort and strengthen the souls of the righteous, after the glaring temptations with which the ungodly beset their path during the races. Verily, it is a vice which calleth to Heaven for his consuming fire, and that the vanity of balls and gay apparel should cease from the land. But, as I was saying, this coming of Mr. Macnamara is surely providential, for I will bid him mingle in his discourse some heart-searching rebukes against the wickedness of those in power; and that it behoves us to weaken their hands ere it be too late, and the witchcrafts of Jezebel, and the scarlet sins of Babylon, envelope our unfortunate country as with a garment. But let us hasten on our way

to your brother's; he will think we loiter in the path of duty.

Crossing the principal street of Kingsland, and then turning up a lane, they soon reached the house they sought, which, standing aloof from the town, was smartly separated from the road by an open iron railing, painted a bright pea green. Within was a neatly-mown grass-plat, curiously inlaid with flower-beds of grotesque form, and in the centre a splendid piece of rockery, all glowing with bits of coloured glass and various broken shells. The gravel walk up to the house was neatly edged with cut box, and the smart brass knocker on the door, and plate with the name of Mr. Brierly, Solicitor, engraved in roman letters, told the taste of the owner, and its unspotted brightness, the housewifely eye of his sister.

Miss Brierly led the way to her *bow-dower*, as she always called a dirty little room looking into the garden, where she said they should be less interrupted than "in the parlour."

As the room was a fair sketch of the pursuits and taste of the owner, we shall venture on a slight description. The window opened to the ground, and, lest a northern sun should overpower with its beams, was shaded with a verandah, the blackness of whose aspect prevented anything like freshness in the creepers which were intended to encircle it, but with brown and shrivelled leaves, refused to advance beyond a foot in height. To atone for this perversity of nature, there were some scarlet geraniums in scarlet pots, and a stone vase placed on a pedestal, in which was a fuchsia, at last killed by the north-east wind and want of sun, though it had lingered on through several months.

The size of the room was diminutive, though it contrived to hold a multiplicity of things. The curtains were of printed calico, in which green and scarlet predominated; and "fresh done up," as Miss Brierly would say, with a lining of bright blue cotton. The

sofa at one side of the window was of common leather, now rather the worse for wear, being bought at a broker's in Kingsland, at a sale of old furniture; the sofa-table was covered with what had once been a scarlet shawl of the fair mistress of the domain, and in former days was known by the name of a "Whittle." On this were arranged no knick-knacks of modern taste, but a box, which was lettered, 'Remember the Heathen," with a little slit into which the remembrances were to fall,—then there was another of yet larger dimensions, with a similar slit, and in red letters,—"Beware of the W—— of Babylon—Give freely to the Anti-Popery Society!" Scattered about were missionary tracts, ornamented with prints of naked dancing negroes, or the mighty car of Juggernaut, crushing hundreds of writhing victims.

Then there was a profusion of pretty little books, bound in red and blue, and pink silk, with the titles on their sides in golden letters,

such as "Small Rain,"—"Dew drops from Heaven,"—"Roses and Lilies from Sharon," &c., &c. And last, not least, was to be seen a painted straw basket, with an embroidered label, "Work for the Lying-in-Charity."

Thrust under the sofa, but unfortunately not *hid*, was also a basket of less ornamental materials, and evidently for *use* not, *show*, containing a dirty cap, from which the lace was being unpicked, a pair of *holy* black silk stockings, with cotton tops and feet, once white—and numerous other useful, but not ornamental articles, of a like description.

The chimney-piece was ornamented with two black figures of negroes in chains, holding up their supplicating hands, and grinning at each other. In the middle, to match, was a chimney-sweeper, driving an ass. Above was suspended a print of the famous Mr. Macnamara, dressed in his gown and bands, with an open bible in his hand.

At the side of the room, opposite the sofa

and its accompanying table, was an old piano, with some psalm tunes open, as if recently played, while on one side lay a music-book, entitled—"Moore's Irish Melodies, adapted to sacred songs." Of these parodies, we would not pollute our pages with an extract, for, with a profanity from which our nature shrinks, but which is considered Evangelical by a certain set, the terms of earthly love and endearment are there addressed to the Deity.

In this appropriate receptacle for the work going on, Mr. Brierly and his coadjutor composed the flaming placards, &c, which were to enlighten the people. For example, let us take one :—

"Electors of Kingsland,—Stand firm to the established religion of your country, or an inroad will be made by an idolatrous and accursed enemy, led on by a flagitious and sensual ministry, which will lay our churches with the ground, and desolate our hearts with persecution and

blood. Up, then, and be doing, or the Roman Catholics will be upon us! Up, and be firm in opposition to the return of any member for your borough who will strengthen the bonds of those now in power, and assist the Pope of Rome once more to gain the ascendancy over us! Support only a friend to your country, your religion, and your God. Support only a Conservative!"

While deeply engaged in their employment, Mr. Silverdale was announced, and received with a cordial welcome, especially by the fair spinster, whose hand he piously pressed between both of his own, before taking his seat beside her on the sofa.

Mr. Silverdale was the curate of the parish; and, though he espoused the same principles in religion and politics as his superior, he exemplified them in a different way; he was young, and the ladies of Kingsland thought him handsome, in which opinion he fully coincided. He was as

much a dandy as his clerical dress allowe of, and his carefully-curled locks an white cambric handkerchief were alway redolent of perfume. His manner, so and gentle, with speech drawled seldom above a whisper, insinuated him greatly into the good graces of a certain set of hi congregation. There was a boarding-schoo of young ladies to whom he was engaged t expound the scriptures, and make spiritua love, once a week, who raised him up as a perfect god of their idolatry; and, had they been Catholics, Saint Silverdale would certainly have been added to the calendar.

CHAPTER XVII.

› be good and disagreeable, is high treason against
."

ELIZABETH SMITH.

ANY of the prevailing passions of man-
very undeservedly pass under the
e of religion, which is thus made to ex-
ɜ itself in action, according to the nature
ıe constitution in which it resides. So
, were we to judge from appearances,
would imagine in some that religion is
› better than sullenness and reserve; in
rs, the despondings of a melancholy
perament; in others, the formality of

[illegible], is this injustice
ture of religion more appa
morose dogmas which a
these days are desirous of
only true principles of fait

There are those who pe
their own party views, an
themselves a superior sancti
and abuse at their more m
in the faith, and, totally for
rity is the bond of all virtu
can possibly be right but th

There are those who
appear that religion is to loo
bonds of our nature,—tha
from " blossoming as a rose,
into a sterile and gloomy wa

must be only with those who assume the slang of their own set. It is even affirmed, and by those whose education might teach them better, that England is soon to lose all her social meetings, that balls and races, and all the ancient amusements of our country, are to be cast down beneath the rule of iron under which they would subjugate her.

Pages, vain and trifling as our's would be considered, will probably never reach the eyes of such as these, but to the young and inexperienced, and perhaps vascillating minds of those they would alarm, let this salutary caution be addressed.

All mortal opinions are fallible—look not then merely to human interpretations of the Bible, but study that sacred volume yourselves, and gather your religious principles from *thence*, pure and unsullied by the dross of earthly prejudice and passions.

Certainly the extraordinary mania, which in some neighbourhoods is spreading, to the bane of all friendly and social intercourse,

had made no alarming inroad round Kingsland, for the repeated rattling of carriages along its streets, told that the second Race Ball was to be yet fuller attended than the first; and, with a sparkling eye and light step, our heroine again entered the scene of her late triumph.

Again Cecil Aston was the first to secure her hand for a waltz, and Sir James Eastham for a quadrille, while engagements for those to follow came so quickly, that she laughingly said she must keep a dancing-book, as they did a betting one, or it was impossible her memory could serve her true.

Early in the evening, they were joined by the Duchess of Kingsland and Lady Stavordale, who, with an attempt at cordiality in her rigid manners, said her daughter-in-law would be very happy to join their party in the dance now forming, if they would allow her, which being courteously acceded to, Ernest Cavendish was introduced, and led her to the set of waltzers, though rather in

fear lest she should mar the perfect elegance of his movements and the correctness of his steps; but he soon found his fears were groundless, for never did "step more light or ear more true" thread the dizzy mazes of this inspiring dance. Supported by the experienced arm of the most reputedly elegant of Almack's Waltzers, the slight elastic form of the Marchioness seemed to float in air, as she followed the more stately manner of Lady St. Clair, who, leaning back on her partner's arm, and with head stretched to the utmost possible distance, truly moved "in form a Goddess, and in gait, a Queen." Again, in a yet different style, advanced the classical form of Clara Cameron, and a retiring diffidence was in the outline of her perfect figure, as, encircled by the arm of Cecil Aston, she gaily trode the lively measures.

But of all the lovely faces in that fairy ring none looked so *seraphically* happy, if such a word may be used to aught of mortal mould, as Lady Georgiana Selby, whose soft

she smiled in his face wit
innocence of her guileless
gust of air, from the rapi
movements, sent her glos
to touch his manly cheek, a
he stooped to whisper fo
which none might hear bu

Never since her marriag
vordale spent so lively an
Duchess and her daughters
the Marquis to follow at th
continued in Lady St. Clair'
and free to enjoy it, as her
band was called off from
what he thought a necess
make the agreeable to thos

she was married and of higher rank than the Countess, though, as yet, unknown to the fashionable world, and a lurking idea crossed his mind that he could bring her into notoriety, equally public, if not equally desirable.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"A time like this, a busy, bustling time,
Suits ill with writers, very ill with rhyme;
Unheard we sing, when party rage runs strong,
And mightier madness checks the flowing song,
Then party-poets are like wasps, who dart
Death to themselves, and to their foes but smart."

CRABBE

THE eventful period for the Kingsla
election had now arrived, and the anxi
hopes of each party sanguinely anticipa
success. For once, Lord St. Clair alm
wished himself not a peer, that he might t
a part in the exciting scene which
coming on, and could have himself no
nated his young friend, Cecil Aston, "as a
and proper person to represent the anci

Borough of Kingsland in Parliament." But, as this was impossible, he had for many days been tutoring Sir James Eastham, on whom this important duty was to fall, on the substance and form of his opening speech, by which Cecil Aston was to be introduced.

Sir James was gifted with no oratorical powers, and though no man in England could lead on a pack of hounds in more gallant style, he much doubted being able to stem the torrent of Tory hisses which would assail him. Still, he learned his lesson from the Earl with untiring assiduity, and set off on the eventful morning, as he said, "well primed," and determined that no din from the opposite party, should prevent his firing off his well-got-up speech in capital style.

A platform for the speakers was erected in the Town Hall, and there all the "gentility" of Kingsland, as they called themselves, as well as the tag-rag-and-bobtail of the place were assembled, when the cavalcade

candidate, Mr. Cecil Aston.
were the shouts that wel
they decidedly possessed the
multitude, and though Lo
nantry had generally no v
rough, and, if they had, w
fectly free to choose betwee
by their liberal and generou
lord, yet respectful attachm
more than coercion could ha
within a moderate distance
attending, decorated with
ribbons, the colours which C
assumed in memory of that g
whose gigantic strides towar
reform he would himself fain
with feeble steps.

tire. A blue satin pelisse was confined round the neck with a buff scarf of buff gauze, while feathers of the same blended colours drooped over a bonnet of delicate straw, within which, among her fair ringlets, was adjusted the clear blue flowers of the memophila, freshly gathered by the hand of the old gardener before she left the Park.

Clara's costume was assorted with a similar taste and design, though of less costly materials. A plain white muslin dress was confined round her slender waist by a blue ribbon, clasped with a turquoise buckle, while bracelets of the same stone, surmounted gloves of buff. A white satin bonnet was trimmed with the flowers of the "forget-me-not," which were also embroidered on a light French scarf, while a nosegay of the same flowers, mixed with myrtle, and the pale buff of the azalia, completed her becoming attire.

The party from Kingsland House arrived almost simultaneously with the opposing

one, and laid the flattering unction t
souls that much of the deafening ap
which had then scarcely subsided
called forth by their appearance,
which the rough tones of Mr. Ru
voice were distinctly heard, and e
once Mr. Silverdale ventured on to
yond an insinuating whisper.

The Duchess of Kingsland, wi
daughters and Lady Stavordale, w
decked with prodigious bows of
ribbon, which, joined to the
locks of the young ladies, and the
flush on Lord Stavordale's whit
seemed to add fire to the glowing
of an August sun shining throu
windows.

Lady St. Clair and her friends ha
immediately behind the speakers
party, and, when Sir James Eastha
as nominator of Cecil Aston, a
fear certainly pervaded them for his
as a public speaker, and the C

wished in vain that the law would have allowed the bold and experienced eloquence of her lord to have introduced the young candidate to the notice of his electors. Fortunately, Sir James was a popular man in the neighbourhood, from his open hospitality, and his keeping an excellent pack of foxhounds and harriers, for the enjoyment of all who relished such sports, and few are the English yeomen who do not.

Under these favourable auspices, he came forward amidst a deafening sound of applause, and began in a steady voice—

"Gentlemen—Electors—Independent Electors of Kingsland,—I come forward to present to your notice Mr. Cecil Aston, as a fit and proper person * * *"

Here arose a clamour of hisses, and "No, no," from the opposite party, headed by some paid adherents, chosen by their agent, Mr. Brierly, for the extent of their impudence and the strength of their lungs.

Sir James attempted to go on, but th thread of his well-tutored lesson was broken and he strove in vain to regain it.

"I come forward, gentlemen, independen electors of Kingsland,—I come forward, was for the third time being stammered ou by the now thoroughly-bewildered barone and laughs were arising from the opposi party, when Clara, in an agony of despa for the cause, whispered into Lady S Clair's ear—

"If this goes on, all will be lost. I ha a trick of prompting so as none can hear— will try it."

The ladies were standing, the better see and hear what was going on, wh Clara advanced a step beyond the othe and was close behind the baronet.

"Go on—listen to me," caught his e and he had self-possession enough not look round; and, after an audible cou which seemed to his auditors to clear aw the nervousness of an opening speech,

followed unhesitatingly the clear, gentle voice which sounded in his ear alone, as she spoke with her small ungloved hand raised before her mouth, to conceal its movements, and at the same time to convey the sound more exclusively where she intended.

"Independent electors of Kingsland,—You will pardon the momentary embarrassment of one whose voice is more used to cheer you on in the hunting-field than on the hustings—whose voice is more used to the Tally-ho of the huntsman than to the subtle debates of political strife, and the eloquence of public speaking. But now that I am once off on the right scent, I trust that I shall not again be thrown out by the yells of any untrained and recreant hounds in the pack.

"Gentlemen, and independent electors,—I deeply feel the honour of being chosen to nominate Mr. Cecil Aston as a fit and proper person to represent you in Parliament; and I fearlessly assert that no one

could be found more calculated to fill the arduous and responsible situation of your representative.

"My honourable friend has been known to you all from his birth; it is no stranger who asks your suffrage, but one whose character, whose pursuits, whose very feelings, I might say, are open to you; and, let me assure you, that the more you look into them, the more you will find to admire and esteem.

"Such then is the moral character of the man I propose to you; of his political one, I shall leave himself to tell you, only briefly stating that you will find his principles truly liberal, and that, while he seeks to reform the abuses which may have crept into the venerated and time-endeared institutions of our Church and State, he would do it with the hand of a friend, not of an enemy, as those who arrogate to themselves the names of Conservatives would wish you to suppose. No, gentlemen, it is the Whigs

are the true Conservatives, who would
with timely repair the sacred institu-
of our country, who would not only
r, but would also beautify and enlarge
, not stand inertly by, and while the
crumbled into dust, whine over their
y, or bellow at the foes they found
approaching. This is not the conduct
e Whigs, and glorying in the proud ap-
tion, ennobled by the names of Fox, or
rey, I conclude, by again soliciting your
n support for Mr. Cecil Aston, the
g candidate in the approaching contest."
r James sat down amidst the hearty
rs of his auditors, and the cordial con-
ulations of his more immediate friends,
were in amaze at the fluency with
h he got through his speech. Lady
Clair quietly pressed Clara's arm, and
eaning smile passed between them.
he nomination was seconded in what
ıt be termed a *neat* speech by Mr.
k, who considered himself to be the
ing man in the borough.

When Cecil Aston rose to make his first essay in the arena of political strife, his noble appearance, his manly beauty, his open expression of countenance, were strong passports in his favour, and when the tones of his melodious and well-modulated voice fell upon the ear, all were wrapt in attentive silence, after the first loud burst of applause had died away.

He first explained the articles which he thought essential in a true political creed, and assured his hearers that to these he would remain stedfast among all the opposition which might surround him; he then adverted to the no-popery question which seemed now the favourite watchword of the Conservatives, and was propagated with a bitterness of invective and total want of Christian charity well suited to the words when, warming with his subject, his cause, gradually assumed a deeper flow of eloquence, and he thus concluded his speech:—

"I have heard the incendiary mode of proceeding of the anti-Catholic agitators defended, on the ground that these strong statements are required to keep the country in a temper to resist the encroachments of Popery. God knows that no such stirring is required to keep the anti-Popery fire alive. The people, forgetting that Saxon England and Scotland were converted to Christianity by Roman Catholics; forgetting that their own ancestors remained Roman Catholics for ages, and were at last converted to Protestantism much more by submission to the authority of those whom they supposed to know better than themselves, than by any general conviction of the error of the old religion, are forward to take up any surmise thrown out by the avowed enemies of the Roman Catholics, however uncharitable and absurd it may be, to rise against them with all the outrage of popular fury, or to pursue them by the slow torture of civil proscription."

"The ordinary state of feeling towards the Roman Catholics is one of settled distrust and dislike; and, under the railing accusations and rabid declamations of the no-Popery orators, this turns into positive hatred. It is melancholy to hear men, otherwise amiable and benevolent, speak with bitter contempt of their poor Roman Catholic brethren, whose ignorance and helplessness ought only to excite their active sympathy; but it is really shocking to hear them talk in a tone of the coolest indifference of leaving millions of their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects to perish for lack of knowledge, because they will not at once consent to be brought up as Protestants.

"I trust that the common sense and Christian feeling of England will awaken before this unholy agitation has gone the whole length of confirming the Roman Catholics in their errors, of making the name of Protestant generally odious, and of converting a generous, a brave, and a

numerous people, who are our nearest neighbours, from willing fellow-subjects into irreconcileable enemies.

"If we look calmly and dispassionately on the state of parties around us, if we read the statements put forth by those who especially call themselves of the High Church party, and see how nearly their opinions reach to the dogmas of that church they so opprobriously revile, we cannot but see that there is in the very heart of the Conservative body, fixed and implanted, a catholicism, differing only in guise and semblance from that of Rome. Its supporters are the guardians of those very springs from which the waters of Conservatism have so long and constantly flowed over England; they are men who strive with all the warmth of enthusiasm and the steady effectiveness of combined labour. From the centre, the whole mass is gradually fermenting and leavening. When such facts are seen and recognised by all men who care to observe

the state of society among us, how shall we sufficiently wonder at the weakness of those who have felt, or the dishonesty of those who have feigned, an apprehension of the advancement and restoration of the Roman faith in England, as a consequence of the triumph of the liberal party, who have dared to denounce in a Reform ministry a union, purely and evidently political, with the upholders of the principles which in their own body are fixed and inherent, and daily extending themselves; and who, for the base purpose of again raising the false and hypocritical cry of 'No Popery,' have deemed no time and occasion so fitting as when they might hope thereby to impede the efforts and diminish the popularity of a government, which, for the first time in the history of Britain, is striving to perform towards Catholic Ireland the works, so long and fatally deferred, of justice and of mercy."

The hisses and groans of the Kingsland adherents were loud and vehement when

Cecil Aston closed his speech, and it certainly was no "combination of sweet sounds" which resounded through the building, when amidst mingled cries of applause and reprobation, the Marquis of Stavordale rose to present himself.

His usually white face was red from emotion, and the naturally harsh tones of his voice were increased by the nervousness of his situation. However, he proceeded in a regular set speech to put forth his political sentiments, well seasoned with the acrimony and sarcastic observations of his nature, and altogether got through in what would be called a very creditable manner; though evidently without one burst of genius, or flow of impassioned eloquence.

His nomination was seconded by one of the country squires, and the assemblage broke up with a poll being demanded by the Kingsland party, Cecil Aston having decidedly the show of hands in his favour.

A violent speech was executed by Mr.

Rugeley, and Mr. Silverdale attempted to make his oily accents heard, but it proved a failure, and he shrank away for comfort and flattery to some young ladies of his flock.

Lady St. Clair made a point of talking to the Duchess before they left the place, and really feeling no remorse, her naturally bland manner and easy courtesy irresistibly softened down the at first unbending hauteur of the august lady, who, inwardly fearing the weakness of her own party, was, of course, proportionally ready to take offence, had it been possible to do so. But the Countess adroitly steered clear of politics, and succeeded so completely in her powers of conciliation, that, much to Lady Stavordale's delight, the Duchess agreed to join them in their drive back to St. Clair Park, and take luncheon there, being not so distant as their own residence.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Oh! said the Hind, how many sons have you,
Who call you mother, whom you never knew?
But most of them who that relation plead,
Are such ungracious youths as wish you dead;
They gape at rich revenues which you hold,
And fain would nibble at your grandame gold."

DRYDEN.

UNFORTUNATELY for Mr. Rugeley's expectations of the beneficial effects of Mr. Macnamara's powerful appeal from the pulpit of Kingsland church, the election was terminated in favour of the Whig candidate before he arrived to fulminate his violent doctines for the edification of Mr. Rugeley's congregation.

The church of Kingsland was not one o those modern buildings which might pa almost as well for a play-house, and by th light smart style of their decorations, remov all that solemn and chastened awe, whic according to our notions, ought to attend place of worship,—but it was one of tho fine old specimens of gothic architectur which are still to be found scattered among us. Its solemn aisles, supported by massiv pillars, were bounded on each side by th dark carved oak of the pews, and in th centre one rose the venerable pulpit fro which for so many centuries the word o God had been preached by his humbl though yet zealous ministers. Alas, for th days when such tenets as Mr. Macnamara' are heard from its holy precincts!

The attraction of what is called a popular and in these times almost synonymous term evangelical preacher, had attracted a mor than usually full congregation in the venerable church of Kingsland.

A certain set of religionists would shudder at the idea of a play-house, or any place of worldly amusements, but will grudge neither time, trouble, nor expense to hear a preacher, whose chief attraction is novelty, and probably those very arts of declamation and oratory which they condemn on the stage. They would avoid a ball-room, as the gates to perdition, but will rush in shoals to a missionary-meeting, or any of a similar kind, and listening to the exhibitions of vanity, will unshrinkingly yield to the passions of envy and uncharitableness, display, and ostentation, for which no fairer field could be found than those which they esteem it pious to frequent.

In a spirit such as this, no wonder that the crowd became extreme to hear the famed Mr. Macnamara, and every eye was impatient to catch a glimpse of his really fine and commanding figure, as he walked into the vicar's pew.

The beautiful and impressive prayers of our Church were quickly slurred over by Mr. Silverdale, it being a part of their opinions to make devotion a very secondary matter to the hearing an edifying discourse. The full-toned organ was reverberating through the building when the preacher's stately step ascended the stairs of the pulpit. He looked with a feeling of gratified pride at the numbers assembled before him; and then, with well-practised humility and gracefulness of attitude, stooped his head in prayer over a delicate cambric pocket handkerchief.

As he rose from his recumbent position his height became more conspicuous, and the general outline of his countenance and deep-toned modulations of his voice would as much have made his fortune as an actor as he seemed determined they should do as a preacher.

Nothing could be more artificial than th

solemn air with which he took his Bible from the cushion on which he had laid it before he commenced his devotions; and, slowly opening its leaves, appeared to seek the well-marked place from whence he read his text—"Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezabel, and her witchcrafts are so many."

It was not his purpose now to give merely, what would be termed, a "profitable evangelical discourse," but to carry religious bigotry and political intolerance to the greatest possible height. There was nothing in his manner of the mild benevolence of Apostolical preaching but the fire of the Zealot and the self-conceit of the Pharisee. With an air of proud superiority, he looked down on those beneath him, as if sure that his words would be received with all the veneration which he deemed their due. His impassioned action and rapid flow of

eloquence, would have called forth unbounded plaudits on the stage; but he must now content himself with the upturned eyes and clasped hands of his auditors.

He began by a vivid description of Jezebel's depravities—but he evidently did not wish them merely to be applied to the enormities of the Romish system. Another and sinister application was intended, which he covertly delighted to dwell upon. But, when this first part of his exhibition was over, he made up for any apparent delay in his attack upon Popery, by the furiousness of his present language.

"The time was now come," he said, "when everybody must choose between God's side and the Devil's. We must fight even unto death; we must lay down our lives rather than submit."

Several times in the course of the three-quarters of an hour in which he was thus

haranguing his hearers, speaking in the character of Jehu, he called out with great vehemence, "Who is on my side, who?" And again he reiterated, with frenzied zeal, "Is it peace, Jehu? What hast thou to do with peace;" as with outstretched arms, or an appealing look, he appeared to call for the vengeance of that Heaven he thus so awfully blasphemed.

Alas! indeed, for England, when hundreds and hundreds of her people can be found infatuated enough to listen to doctrines such as these, fulminated with all the vehement impetuosity of a Loyola. That an English congregation can, with every appearance of the profoundest reverence, drink in the words of a preacher, who, disgracing the holy title of a "minister of peace," dares thus to outrage the very sanctuary of his master, with a violence of language which would shame the veriest pothouse in the land.

It would be difficult to imagine that fa-sification could be carried to such a leng of fearful profanity as this discourse di played—a discourse, which, in the opini of his adherents, was to lay another sto on the vast fabric of his fame.

It would have been a curious stud for a Lavater to have watched the varyin countenances of his hearers while this rhap sody of vindictive bigotry was going on. There were sentences when the more mo-derate were seen rather to wince under the infliction, and occasionally a look of almost surprise that such were the precepts of a gospel which has been expressly declared to us, "to be tidings of great joy, and on earth *peace*, good-will towards men."

But the stern features of Mr. Rugeley never relaxed, except occasionally a gleam of ma-lignant pleasure lit up their morose expres-sion, when words of peculiar vindictiveness fell upon his ear. Miss Brierly sat in

wondering astonishment and wrapt admiration of this god of her idolatry; but whether it was always the sentiment, or the fine manly form displayed in every attitude, of theatrical grace which rivetted her eyes upon his face and figure, it is not for us to determine.

We shall cease to think this sketch of a popular preacher of the present day overdrawn, if we turn to the language which is used by another section of the same party, or, we should rather say, who has the same end in view, that of stemming the bright tide of national education, lest it should bear away amongst its waves the fetters with which they would bind the souls of men to their own controul, a controul only different in words to that very popery they pretend to fear.

And moreover, the language now alluded to is not spoken in the warmth of declamation, but deliberately written and printed.

These writers do not content themselves with a general opposition to those principles in whose strength mankind are pressing forward towards justice and freedom. The specific objects, social and political, for which men are now struggling so earnestly, they denounce not as idle and valueless, not as dangerous or simply hurtful, but as the very snares and devices of the devil for the ruin of human souls.

If a paragraph like the following can be deliberately composed and sent to the press, by a body of men calling themselves pre-eminently the true Church, we can wonder no longer at any violence of abuse which in the zeal of extempore preaching may disgrace our pulpits.

"Far be it from us to be seduced with the fair promises in which Satan is sure to hide his poison. Do you think he is so

unskilful in his craft, as to ask you openly and plainly to join him in his warfare against the truth? No, he offers you baits to tempt you. He offers you civic liberty; he promises you equality; he promises you trade and wealth; he promises you a remission of taxes; he promises you reform. This is the way in which he conceals from you the kind of work to which he is putting you. He tempts you to rail against your rulers and superiors; he does so himself, and induces you to imitate him; or he promises you illumination; he offers you knowledge, science, philosophy, enlargement of mind; he scoffs at times gone bye; he scoffs at every institution which reveres them; he prompts you what to say, and then listens to you, and praises you, and encourages you; he bids you mount aloft; he shows you how to become as Gods; then he laughs and talks

with you, and gets intimate with yo
he takes your hand, and gets his finge
between yours, and grasps them, a
then you are his."

Oxford Tracts, 83, p. 1

CHAPTER XX.

"Ladye, I have a castle fair;
Ladye, I have jewels rare,
To deck your neck and gem your hair;
Ladye, I have lands and wealth;
Ladye, I have strength and health—
In pity say me 'yea!'"

OLD SONG.

"But this was taught me by the dove—
To die—and know no second love."

THE GIAOUR.

EVERY day since the favourable result of the Kingsland election, saw Sir James Eastham a favoured visitor at St. Clair Park. The Earl was highly delighted with the éclat of his opening speech, attributing it all

of his own good morning on the subject, al
though he said, he had rather taken a differ
ent line of argument to that he had men
tioned. For which Sir James excused him
self by the truth,—that the infernal cla
mour of the opposite side so completel
bothered his brain, that every word the Ear
had told him went out of his head, and h
thought it devilish lucky he got on at all.

How that getting on was effected, re
mained a secret between Lady St. Clai
Clara and himself. He was glad to es
cape the laugh, which his friends woul
not be sparing of at being prompted by
woman, even though that woman was youn
and beautiful as Clara Cameron: and sh
was more than equally glad that the secre
was not divulged, feeling the awkwardnes
of so warm a panegyric on Cecil Aston b
ing attributed to her.

Sir James was by no means of a jealou
temperament, and much more inclined to b

flattered and gratified by her assistance in getting him out of such a "confounded scrape," as he called it, than to be any way annoyed by her praise of another, particularly of one who was a great favourite of his own, though he complained sometimes of his being "too fond of books, and that kind of thing to be a really good sportsman, which was a thousand pities, for, with a little more regular practice, he would be one of the best shots and riders in the county."

With the pleasing assurance in his own mind, that Clara's prompt assistance arose solely and entirely from kindness to him, and interest in his success, he paid his *devoirs* at St. Clair Park with redoubled assiduity, and was only waiting a favourable opportunity for laying himself, and all his fair domains and possessions, the superlative Arab among the number, at the feet of the "fair ladye of his love!"

Coquette as we have named Clara to be,

first of these feelings, and
risen superior to the latter
impression she had mad
checked his attentions, ha
made up her mind to accep
he offered it.

That she could bring hei
man so utterly incapable o
void in her heart, may, at fir
strange, but if we search dee
cesses of a woman's heart a
love, we shall see that this
might, in her case, be the str
recommendation.

The first attachment of an
sioned, and youthful heart h

proud in spirit to own even to her own mind the havoc and the change thus wrought in her character and her estimate of happiness.

Amidst the wreck of every fond affection and tender hope of her nature, there remained one singleness of feeling, if we may so call it, which identified itself with every sentiment, and clung round her with a tenacity not to be eradicated. She had loved fervently though not fortunately, and had cast her whole stock of love into the die which now remained as a blank in her hand. Truly a bankrupt in love, she could try the dangerous experiment no more.

> "Earth holds no other like to thee,
> Or if it doth, in vain for me;
> 'Tis all too late, thou wert—thou art—
> The cherished madness of my heart."

This was the feeling which prompted her to refuse the love of any heart, which, in

earlier days, might have been congenial to her own, but not to shrink from an union with one who could never remind her of the past.

In marrying Sir James Eastham, she should secure herself a brilliant establishment and a kind husband—she wished not for an affectionate one. He would never discover any want of love in his wife, and she felt convinced she could make him happy in his own way. His darling pursuits of hunting, shooting, fishing, and racing, were by no means distasteful to her. Living from a child in the country, she had none of the fastidiousness of a town-bred lady, and could enjoy a gallop in the rain, or a walk in the sun, with no fears for either her health or complexion. She could quite enter into his love for horses and dogs, and, in fact, she had made up her mind, that as mistress of Eastham Court she could pass on very pleasantly through life, with much of enjoyment if not of happiness.

With these sentiments, which gained ground by Lady St. Clair's cordial approval of them, there was no danger of the Baronet finding his visits ill-received.

Early on the morning of which we are now writing, he had astonished his grooms by mounting his favourite Arab in a new fashion; and, wrapping a large horse-cloth round him, sit sideways on the saddle, while he cantered up and down the stable-yard. Finding that the noble animal made no objection to this novel mode of riding, he disencumbered himself of his strange paraphernalia, and, throwing the other leg across the saddle, laid the bridle on the sagacious creature's neck, and bade him choose his own road. Well knowing that, as lately, he had oftener been eating corn in the St. Clair stables than in his own, thither, if left to his own guidance, would he infallibly go—and so it proved—for being unusually given to thought this morning, and the hour too

early to require any acceleration of speed he never touched the reins till he found himself at the door of St. Clair Park.

Had Sir James been given to sentiment he might, very appropriately, have whistled the tune of the Lapland song—

> "Full well my Rein Deer knew
> I've but one path on earth,
> The path which leads to you."

The dignified groom of the chambers rather stared at so untimely a visitor, and, as he ushered him into the breakfast-room, said he believed his lady was not down stairs yet, but he doubted not soon would be. However, more to his purpose, Clara was, and, after a prolonged detention of the fairy little hand extended to him, he was thinking should he make the awful declaration at once, and end his suspense, when the great bell rang its sonorous summons to breakfast, and the Earl at the same moment entered the room.

"Ah! Sir James, I am glad to see you like early rising as well as I do; depend upon it there is nothing so beneficial as a walk before the dew is off the grass. I even keep up the good practice in London, and Banquo, Clara, and I generally had a quiet walk, by the Serpentine, every morning, while the generality of the world were in bed."

"Why, my dear Sir James," said the Countess, smiling as she opened the door, "who would have thought of seeing you so early? What uneasy sprite has woke you from your slumbers?"

"I came to petition for being yours and Miss Cameron's escort this morning—the day is so glorious for a ride; and, as I know you are going after luncheon to Kingsland House for a visitation, it will give you spirits to endure the ennui awaiting you, to breathe the fresh air on horseback first. Besides——" and he stammered, while a

favour to ask of Miss
will deign to mount my
swer for his carrying
Don't you think, Lady S
make a splendid pair, ea
its kind."

"Really, Clara, you ou
make Sir James a low cur
a compliment, particularl
general flatterer," exclaim
"what say you to this plan
tion in the world to this earl
idea is excellent; and pe
St. Clair will join us himsel
pony."

"It is too warm a dav

try as you and Clara do. But I do not think she has said whether she dares to mount Sir James's Arab, as he purposes. Really, my dear, I think it will be safer for you to keep to your own tried steed."

"Oh, no thank you, my dear uncle; I have no fear; you know I delight in novelty; and this Arab is such a beautiful creature, and so good tempered, I am sure he will carry me delightfully—do let me try him."

"Ah, Clara, you and Gertrude always have your own way, you know—so be it as you will. I will order the horses to be ready in an hour, by which time I shall have finished my morning's conference with my steward. Sir James, you had better superintend the saddling of Arab yourself for his new rider;" and, smiling good-naturedly, Lord St. Clair left the room.

Clara had spoken without change of coun-

tenance, or tremor of voice, though a deadl faintness had passed over her heart, as sl felt her words the deciding ones of h destiny;—she well remembered Sir Jam declaring that no one but his intended w should ever ride Arab, and on each glan from Lady St. Clair, told she had not fo gotten this either, so raising one of the wi dows which opened on the garden, s stepped out to look at her flowers.

Clara was following, but she felt a fi grasp on her wrist, and Sir James : quested a few minutes' conversation. \ will not make a third in that eventful *tete tete;* suffice it to say, that in less than t minutes, they followed Lady St. Clair ir the garden, the Baronet's face flushed wi delight, and Clara's calm and compos though perhaps slightly tinged with sadne and paler than her wont.

"My dear Lady St. Clair, congratuls me," said Sir James, eagerly; "Miss Cam

ron,—Clara, I may now call her, has made me the proudest man in the world; in short, you must know what I mean, she has consented to become Lady Eastham. I must seek the Earl for five minutes to ask his consent, and he shall name his own settlements for his niece. Though I propose they shall be the same as your own, 1,000*l.* a year for her own exclusive expenses during my life, and, if I break my neck some day hunting, an additional 4000*l.* added to it. But, if Lord St. Clair wishes any alteration, it shall be made; all that I have shall be at Clara's service;" and he hurried off to seek the Earl.

Lady St. Clair fondly folded Clara in her arms as she whispered words of endearment and congratulation. Tears for a moment stood in the eyes of the now agitated girl, but hastily wiping them, and recovering all her usual self-possession, she spoke in a calm voice.

"Yes, dearest Contessa, thank God th point is at once decided. You alone know the secret of my heart—its love is for ever blighted.

"I would not for worlds have married one who would ever have felt this as detrimental to his happiness. With Sir James I have no fear of this—he is kind and good-tempered—I can be all *he* will wish for in a wife—I can ride his favourite Arab—I can listen without weariness to the feats of his race-horses, or the details of a fox-hunt—can accompany him to the kennel and the stables, and be amused myself at the same time."

"And," added Lady St. Clair, "you can do more than this, dearest; you can also grace his house as none other could do; you are alike fitted to preside at Easthan Court and in Grosvenor Square. You can give that indescribable air of elegance to his already splendid establishment which

alone is wanted to make it perfect. I anticipate a delightful season with you in town next year, when, as Lady Eastham, you will be inhabiting the empty house opposite ours, which you were lamenting over as shut up, just before we left London. Was I not a very witch to foretell your fortune truly?"

While still busied in conversation, Lord St. Clair and Sir James joined them, the former giving his niece a paternal embrace, and assuring her of the willing and cordial consent he gave to an union which would still keep her near them, both in town and the country—and, turning to his nephew-elect, he added, "You must keep her up to the good habit of early rising in London, Sir James, and then, as we are opposite neighbours, we can still enjoy our morning walk together in the Park, and with your company, in addition."

Sir James was here summoned by groom to superintend the proper saddl of the Arab, and, as if looking still m stately in anticipation of the lovely ri who was to mount him, the noble ani was soon led by his admiring master to door.

Nothing was more becoming to Cl than a riding-dress; it displayed the perf *contour* of her figure, and her features c selled as a Grecian statue, could bear unshading exposure of either a hat, o military cap. She now advanced w more perhaps than a usual glow on face, and first patting the arched neck her new steed, she lightly placed her li foot in the offered hand of Sir James, stead of the groom's, and in a mom sprang into her saddle. The docile, tho high-spirited animal, stood perfectly with his master at his side, and as he h

his voice bidding him carry his mistress gently, his full dark eye seemed glistening with intelligence, and his delicately-shaped ear turned to catch the well-known tones.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Oh! hush, Sir Knight! 'twere female art
To say I do not read thy heart;
Too much, before, my selfish ear
Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
And how, O how can I atone
The wreck my vanity brought on!
One way remains—I'll tell him all,
Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!"

LADY OF THE LAKE.

WE pass over the pleasure, to Sir James at least, of the morning's ride, and his perfect satisfaction at his own and his Arab's success in this their first subjection to a fair lady. We will also leave to imagination a formal dinner and tedious evening at Kingsland House, which was alone enlivened by some

ngs from Lady St. Clair and Clara, who ad both good and cultivated voices. Lady tavordale was too timid to attempt anything efore the Duchess, else she was a musician f no despicable order, and, before her ill-assorted marriage, would warble many a dulcet and cheerful lay, but now her voice was never heard, except in the nursery to lull her darling child to rest, which was the sole enjoyment of her melancholy life. It was truly a lovely child, but no one seemed to regard it with any tenderness except its youthful mother, who lavished on it the whole pent-up affections of her naturally warm heart. As the heir of the Duke of Kingsland, the child had every care and luxury; but this done, none of the family ever thought of caring for its presence, and the father always said babies were a bore.

In this state of things, no wonder how often during the day the Marchioness stole away to enjoy the bright smiles of her child, who

[illegible]

[illegible] breakfast

went to some eternal wo

Marchioness had escape

Clara pleaded a violent h

which she went to her o

cheon-time. But when

privacy of her own thou

more dangerous than the

pany she had left, she has

bonnet, and, merely tying

round her neck, she set

through the gardens.

Inaction, in her presen

seemed impossible; and,

gentle loiter among the

into a walk so rapid

way till she reached a road, which seemed to her merely to intersect the wood, for immediately on the opposite side was a similar path to that she was in. Unhesitatingly she crossed the slight barrier, and forgetting the rapidity of her steps, and still thinking herself in the vicinity of Kingsland House, she did not stop till she reached a rustic bench, now falling into decay, and sat down for a few minutes' rest before she retraced her steps.

She had placed her hand over her brow, as if to shut out thought, when suddenly a well-known voice breathed her name, and starting up, she saw Cecil Aston by her side.

"Good God! Mr. Aston, what brings you here?" was her surprised exclamation. "I thought you did not visit the Kingslands."

"Visit the Kingslands, no my dear Miss Cameron, I do not,—but what has that to do with seeing me here?"

why, everything! Why
grounds, close to their
are going to call?"

"In their grounds, clo
again repeated her asto
"Surely you know the w
in is mine, and a few
bring you within sight
The turnpike-road you
my domain from that
Kingsland."

Clara for once lost he
and blushed deeply at the
committed; for, having
Merton Castle, on the opp
on which she now stood

what different thoughts might not be attributed to her to those which had actually filled her mind, as the now betrothed wife of Sir James Eastham.

Cecil Aston looked enchanted on her speaking face, and, drawing from thence the very construction she feared, for the first time hope of success in winning her affections wakened in his mind. He drew her arm within his as he attended her retreating steps, and, before he well knew what he was saying, his whole soul was on his lips, and he had declared the full force of his impassioned feelings; that for her he felt he had energy enough to gain a name in the senate of his country, and, if lured on by her smile in reward of his toil, he would labour through the heaviest mire of political diplomacy, and win a situation and a fortune not unworthy of her to accept.

> "Oh! when the bays are all his own,
> Be hers the heart to care;
> And when the gold is gained and won,
> Be hers the form to wear."

Clara burst into tears. It had, then come to this; she was to throw the fatal blight of disappointment on the noble ambition of his onward career; she was to make the steep ascent before him yet more difficult by weakening the energies of his mind, and by deadening the impulse of his hopes.

> "How, oh how could she atone
> The wreck her vanity 'd brought on;
> One way remains—she'd tell him all;
> Yes, struggling bosom, forth it shall."

And, true to the meaning of these beautiful lines, she did indeed tell him all,—the same sad tale which, alone to Lady St. Clair, had once before been revealed, she now breathed into his eagerly attentive ear. And her end was answered; for he then felt that hope for him was over.

> "There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
> To give her stedfast speech the lie;
> In maiden confidence she stood,
> Though mantled in her cheek the blood."

And when to this she added that the previous day had affianced her to Sir James Eastham, Cecil Aston drained the cup of bitter disappointment to the dregs.

"Would to heaven, Miss Cameron," he exclaimed, "that I had thus spoken to you one day sooner—you might then have been prevailed on to accept the deep devotion of my heart, and in time my unceasing love, perchance, would have brought oblivion over past sorrows."

"No, no, Mr. Aston, say not thus—think not this for one instant—to spare you this delusion, to show you at once my love could never now be won, have I not revealed a tale of withered hopes, which in most, what I believe is called womanly pride, would have stayed the recital; but I have conquered this, and much more than this—I have conquered my own dread of recurring to feelings, which opened again, even now, rend my very heart-strings. I have done this,

Mr. Aston, to save you suffering—let me at least be rewarded by seeing I have succeeded, and proved to you the truth of my *friendship*, and the impossibility of my *love*. *You* I could never have made happy—your wife must bring you an unfettered and an unwithered heart. Think not I mean to speak slightingly of the man I have accepted for my husband. God forbid I should do or feel so, but his feelings are cast in a different mould, and I refuse not the home he offers me, because I feel persuaded that my want of tenderer feelings will never darken that home to him.

"And here we separate, for we have reached the dividing road—God bless you Mr. Aston!—

'You have the secret of my heart,
Be true, be generous, and depart.'"

Clara reached her own room, and had

bathe her tell-tale eyes with rose-
and to regain her usual appearance
ntenance, when the luncheon-bell
ned the company to a réunion in the
room. This in a country-house is
the most sociable of meals, and most
m the trammels of constraint—then
re talked over, and expeditions and
ients fixed on for the intervening
tween that and dinner, and divided
ties, each can generally contrive to
heir own tastes.

at any time it was difficult to break
the eternal chain of ceremony
ppeared to bind everything at Kings-
ouse—even Lady St. Clair's varied
es and ready wit seemed clogged
ad, and they were forming into a
ly triste circle round the table, when
ies Eastham was announced; rather
ual caller at that solemn mansion.
Duchess for many a year had hoped

to see one of her daughters mistress of Eastham Court, and though hope was now on the wane, was scarcely extinct. Exactly in the same state stood the wishes of Lady Williamson, who now being one of the party, thought it a thousand pities to lose the opportunity for an attack; and, though she could not avoid seeing the Baronet's salutations were offered in a very different style of cordiality to herself and daughters, and to the ladies from St. Clair Park, still she persisted in endeavouring to draw him into a chair between her daughters, but in vain. Metal more attractive was elsewhere; and he was quietly placing himself a chair by the side of Clara, when the shrill voice of the Duchess screeched,—

"Do, Sir James, come here and help me with these partridges."

An appeal which could not be refused, and the foiled lover, in no gentle mood, left the side of "the ladye of his love," wishing

the partridges, and perhaps her Grace, too, *au diable.*

But how little do we know what is best for us, for the poor Duchess, wishing to foil Clara's hopes, only made her triumph conspicuous, for the words her separated swain must now address to her, were necessarily spoken so that all could hear; and Sir James, perhaps nothing loath to exhibit what he thought *his* triumph in having gained so fair a prize, was also little inclined to be thwarted in the cause of his ride to Kingsland House.

There chanced to be an unusual silence around the table, or what in a less gloomy house would have been thought so, when Sir James, in sufficiently audible tones, asked Lady St. Clair if her horses were with her, and if she rode to-day, adding—

"For in that case I beg to be of the party, and Clara and I will exchange horses, as we did yesterday, if she will again honour Arab."

The familiar term of "Clara" did not fall on unregarding ears, and was gall and wormwood to the mortified Dowager's, and though the Duchess could not but now see how matters stood, she could not refrain a sarcastic sneer, which she hoped might be an unwelcome jest to the prize she had lost, and with an expression both of voice and features by no means harmonious, told Sir James, that at last then he had consented for his boasted Arabian to be mounted by another than himself.

"Pardon me, Duchess, I never said he should not; I only affirmed what I still do, that none but myself, or Lady Eastham, should ever hold a rein over my gallant Arab, and I hope the day is not distant when I may be allowed to introduce Miss Cameron to you under that title."

Of course, all eyes were now eager in their gaze, and all tongues loud in congratulations. The Miss Williamsons were

surprised at the cool self-possession of the bride-elect, expecting to see her blushing and simpering, and endeavouring to look interesting, as they would do, if any lucky chance placed them in a similar situation.

For once, the Duchess veiled the bitter bearing of her words, and deigned to be graciously kind. But of all the gentle wishes which flowed from the assembled party, none spoke so truly and therefore so warmly as Lady Stavordale, who rejoiced at the prospect of such a neighbour settled near them, and anticipated some relief from the monstrous gêne of the family circle which so constantly environed her.

Clara sat like a Grecian statue, so calm and unimpassioned was her aspect, though she smiled almost with affection as she met the dark beaming eye of Lady Stavordale, and once with covert scorn as she bowed to the disguised ill-nature of the Duchess.

When the business of luncheon was com-

pleted, the party formed into groups for excursions of some sort before dinner; some driving, some riding, some walking, some fishing, and some shooting. Lady Williamsom contrived that her daughters should join that which attracted the young unengaged men the most, and contented herself with a dowager drive in the park, with the Duchess of Kingsland.

Sir James again enjoyed the triumph of seeing his darling Arab ridden by the most beautiful girl in the country—and, as he thought, in the world, and gratified with the praises and evident happiness of her future husband, Clara came down before dinner into the stately drawing-room of Kingsland House, with a lighter and a more genuinely happy heart than she had long experienced. The certain conviction of bestowing happiness, is of itself alone a pleasant feeling in a kindly heart, and joined to this, Clara's now declared situa-

tion as the betrothed wife of the best match in the county, at once put her *hors de combat* with the other young ladies, and she already received the ready homage and marked attention which the mistress elect of Eastham Court seemed to call for.

The affectionate smile of Lady St. Clair was ever ready to meet hers. Her kind-hearted uncle was evidently rejoicing in her prospects; the delighted eyes of Sir James Eastham, who, under the circumstances, the Duchess could scarcely avoid asking to dance, were ever watching her with triumphant satisfaction of such a prize being his, joined to the generally marked observance of the whole party, could not but be gratifying to the heart of any one, much more so, then, to one so susceptible to kindness as Clara Cameron.

CHAPTER

"So perish all that would revi
The fruitless memories of the

"But lo! the flames are quick
Each fairer vestige of my yo
Page after page that circling
E'en while I strive to trace th

"The Hindoo widow, in affecti
Dies by her lord, and keeps h
Thus perish all that to these w
The living memory, with the li

gagement to Sir James Eastham and the celebration of the marriage, which was to take place at St. Clair Park, may be supposed to pass away amidst congratulations and preparations.

The lawyers had completed settlements which alike were to make the young bride a rich widow, and an independent wife. The milliners of London and Paris had combined to furnish the trousseau with all that was elegant and recherchée, and the jewellers with all that was rich and rare. The fine family diamonds of the Easthams were reset under the correct taste of Lady St. Clair; who had also aided the bridegroom in the selection of his carriages.

Many and various were the plans suggested for the locale of the honeymoon. Sir James had a shooting-box in the most picturesque part of Scotland, which he proposed fitting up more elegantly for the occasion—but it was too late in the year to en-

joy Highland scenery among November fogs, and besides Clara had tact enough to know, that though Scotland might be very agreeable to the Baronet when he could spend all day on the moors with his dogs and gun, it would be a very different place at the present season, and she by no means relished the idea of being shut up for a dull tête-a-tête with a companion who had no intellectual pursuits. So this plan was negatived.

Then Lord St. Clair offered the lending villa he had on the banks of the Thames but Clara's eye spoke no approval, when Sir James exclaimed—

"I have it; by Jove! You have put us on the right scent, my Lord. We will go, that is, if my lady fair pleases, to our house in Grosvenor-square; at this time of year London will be empty as any desert, and then we can give the necessary directions for the re-furnishing the house according to

Clara's taste, to be ready for us when we go there in the spring: this will be something to do, and amuse us at the same time. If you will like this plan, my dear Clara, I will be off to Eastham this instant, and send off a train of servants to prepare things for our reception."

The fair Clara smilingly consented, and thought the plan an excellent one; it would at once give them occupation, and there were a thousand ways with which at any time of year they could amuse themselves in London, and drive off the ennui she dreaded of a continued tête-a-tête, without either field-sports or company to break through its tedium.

Alas! poor Clara, with what different feelings had she once thought of marriage, under what different auspices had she hoped to enter into that holy engagement!

It was now the evening preceding her wedding-day, and Clara had exerted her-

self with apparently perfect composure an cheerfulness, through the routine of a larg party assembled at dinner, to be present a the signing the marriage-settlements.

With quiet self-possession, she took th arm of her affianced bridegroom, as he le to the library, where the signing and seal ing these important documents were to tak place. She gracefully took her seat, "th observed of all observers," and wrote he name with an untrembling hand.

> "If aught that was pertaining
> To him who was her destiny, came back,
> And thrust themselves between her and the light,
> What business had they there at such a time?"

And by a mighty effort she drove the r membrance from her, with no outward tra of suffering except that for a moment l cheek grew paler, which passed unnotic except by the watchful and affection Countess, and a yet more anxious observ Cecil Aston.

Sir James Eastham had asked him to be present as bridegroom's man—his good-natured heart little thinking of the pain he was inflicting. But the disappointed lover did not shrink from the office, and thought it wisest to endeavour at once to steel his feelings to what they must learn to endure in seeing her he had once dared to hope for himself, the wife of another.

Clara was glad that Cecil Aston had thus acquiesced, for she was sure he would not have done so, except from the most honourable motives; and from a determination at once, and for ever, to extinguish hopes, which would then be, not merely fruitless, but criminal; and which she hoped, thus early checked, that some future time another object might call forth anew, and with happier prospects.

The ceremony of this last party at which Clara Cameron assisted, was gone through, as we have already said, with unquivering

her faithful Janet, th
of her soul nearly brok
she was alone; but aga
solve, she tightened t
bidding Janet hasten, a
scarcely heeded the gli
bedecked her form, and
sparkling brightness fro
toilette-table, as she un
her neck and arms, and h
them from her raven hai

If she looked at all it w
the darkness of her inwar
splendour which surroun
was decked with jewels a
Sir James having made i

her young mistress must be happy as she wished her.

Hastily dismissing her attendant, Clara locked the door to ensure no officious return of well-meant kindness on her part; and then, feeling she was indeed alone, she unloosed for once the pent-up torrent of her tears, and, throwing herself back in the chair, worked by a mother's hand, she wept long and unrestrainedly.

She felt they were the last tears she must give to one she had loved so fervently, though unfortunately. With a trembling hand, she unlocked an old-fashioned leather case, which in all probability her mother had originally brought from St. Clair Park, but which from the earliest recollections of infancy had been hers, and in which she had been wont to store the favourite treasures of her heart; at first, they consisted of childhood's valued gifts, perhaps a painted flower, an ivory needle-case, a doll's necklace, or

some such infantile treasures, which changed in character as the possessor also changed, till at length no girlish hoards were there; but the impassioned mementoes of woman's love. The lock of raven hair—the ring of slender round—the letters of tender love—and, yet more dear than all, the miniature picture of those lineaments which were imprinted but too deeply on her heart.

These had never been unlocked since the fatal day which severed the bond between two loving hearts. It was not in Clara's power to restore these relics of a broken faith, for she knew not where to direct to him who once had owned them—her keeping them there was involuntary—but now she felt the time was come when she must destroy, at least, the letters. Without trusting herself with a second glance on the well-known characters, she cast them on the blazing fire.

The case which contained the miniature

ky before her—she took it up—she would lock it up again unopened. By an unfortunate tension of her hand, to grapple as it were with contending feelings, the spring gave way, and the beaming look of those loving eyes came full upon her,—it was too late now to recede—rooted, as by the gaze of a basilisk, long and earnestly did she look.

There was the high and polished brow, "the eye like Jove's, to threaten or command," the oval contour of a face moulded in the lines of the most consummate manly beauty—the smile yet playing on lips of a feminine delicacy of outline. But it must not be—Clara felt it must not be—and closing, with the energy of despair, the clasp which had so unbiddenly opened, she locked the time-worn case, and, for a few minutes, again indulged in tears.

Then, casting back the dark masses of her hair which floated over her forehead, she

shrieking advanced towards the window. E
moving the folds of drapery which cover
it, she flung open the sash, and leant h
burning brow into the clear cold moo
light.

The scene which lay before her was lovel
—rays of vivid silver beamed on the expan
of the park, and quivered among the branch
of the surrounding trees, whose falling leav
were the only sounds which broke on the stil
ness of the hour; with occasionally in th
distance the step of the deer rustling o
those which had already fallen. The boug
of the old cedar rose in solemn grandeu
near, and its dark sombre blue contrastu
well with the vivid autumnal tints whi
still hung on some of the adjacent shrubs.

How many generations had this ven
rable tree waved its branches in majest
grandeur around, and witnessed many a jo
ful and many a sorrowing procession issu

from the gates? Her mother's wedding had passed it—her own was now to follow.

In vain, did Clara try to still the turbulence of contending passions by the calm still scene before her. As she raised her eyes to the sky above, some favourite lines crossed her memory, and she murmured them half aloud to the ear of night:—

"How fresh the dewy air falls on my cheek;
Would that some spirit, clothed in its influence, come
Upon my soul, with one heaven-given drop,
To cool its torment! Fare thee well
Thou star-hung canopy! Far smiling orb
Farewell! No more sweet influences ye fling
As ye were wont, around my desolate heart;
I cannot bear your stillness. Earthquake, storm,
The mighty war of the vexed elements,
Would best comport with my disquiet. Now
On thy calm face I dare not look again!"

Then, closing the window, and re-placing the thick folds of the curtain so as to shut out every ray of that gentle light, she hur-

[illegible] herself on her bed, and, from [illegible] of the mental powers [illegible] on the bodily, she slept long and [illegible].

END OF VOL. I.

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CLARA CAMERON;

THE

BELLE OF THE SEASON.

"She was a form of life and light,
That seen, became a part of sight,
And rose, where e'er I turned mine eye,
The morning Star of Memory."—THE GIAOUR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CLARA CAMERON.

CHAPTER I.

"Her dreams had passed away,
coldly sat, whilst on her brow they bound the
bridal wreath,
coldly, e'en as if 't had been a garland for her death.
stood before the altar, the beautiful, the bride,—
ier demeanour only seen, a calm becoming pride;
feelings were subjected, all under her control,
from her, e'en a moment, no sign of sorrow stole."

DUBLIN REVIEW.

'HE wedding morning of Clara Cameron
:e dark and gloomily. A thick, heavy

November rain was falling; and, when Janet came to unclose the curtains of her young lady's room, not a vestige of the clear, bright scene of the last night presented itself. But Janet, who like all Scotch people dwelt on omens, was eagerly assuring herself, rather than the inattentive ear of her auditor, that, before one o'clock, the hour fixed for the bridal ceremony to take place in the principal drawing-room of St. Clair Park, all these thick and murky clouds would have disappeared, and the sun shine its happy auspices on the bride. She had been talking to the gardener herself, and he was sure the day would clear up; he said besides "he never knew it rain on a St. Clair's wedding-day." The Lady Adelaide, Miss Cameron's mother, was married on a beautiful day in May. Mr. Reynolds remembered it well, for he had strewed the whole church with flowers, and the pathway from the carriage. It was not so much the custom in those days, as it was now, for great weddings

performed in the drawing-room. And
was not quite sure that she liked it so
however, she was sure that her dear young
nust be as happy as she deserved to be.
mes was a nice, kind-hearted gentleman
t he was; and everybody could see he
the very ground she trod upon.

r Clara!—little did she listen to Janet's
ceasing prattle, as she prepared her
ıg toilette; and every costly article of
called forth renewed assurances of the
ıty of the wearer's felicity.

ıctly as the clock struck one, the bride
l the drawing-room, leaning on her
ı arm, followed by Sir James and Lady
lair, with the bridesmaids, the Ladies
and their attendant cavaliers, Captain
ınald and Cecil Aston. The rest of the
ny, with the Bishop of ——, who was
:orm the ceremony, were already assem-
ı receive them.

ı bride was paler than usual, but perfectly

composed. The struggle of the preceding night was over, and she felt the die of her future life was cast for ever. Now to cherish remembrance of the past would be worse than useless—it would be a crime; and, when she knelt at the altar, and vowed to love none else, truly and heartily did she hope to keep the vow.

Her dress was of white velvet, fitting admirably to her perfect figure, trimmed with rich lace, looped up with orange flowers, of which a wreath fresh from the orangery, and gathered by the hands of the old gardener, encircled her head. The long folds of the bridal veil were disposed by the initiated hands of Violette, and displayed a true Parisian elegance.

Everything was arranged in the best possible taste, and the whole scene passed off like a well-managed play. When the happy bridegroom conducted Lady Eastham to the splendid *déjeûner*, commonly called on ordinary occasions, luncheon, which was laid out in the

dining-room, never could a fairer or a livelier pageant meet the eyes of the assembled tenantry and domestics, who lined the great hall through which they passed. The old gardener alone ventured to press forward, and holding to the bride a beautiful white moss-rose, he said in tremulous accents:

"I reared one like this for your mother, dear young lady. Deign to take this from an old man's hand, and with it, an old man's blessing. God bless you, too, Sir James; you may well look proud of this angel!"

Clara took the flower, and pressed it to her lips; she could have done nothing more gracious, and it went straight to the heart of the gratified and attached old man.

At three o'clock, a new travelling carriage, drawn by four of Sir James Eastham's splendid greys, and escorted by two outriders, drove up to the door. Relays of horses were ordered on the road, and the people at the inns where they were to stop duly apprized of their arrival. Lady

Eastham again passed through the hall, wrapp
up in her travelling costume; her face was y
paler than before, and traces of tears, whi
would spring to her eyes as she embraced t
Countess, yet lingered on her cheek, but s
had a kind look, and parting smile, to tha
assembled round; and never did a househo
send forth a young bride with warmer wish
for her happiness, than were now bestowed o
Clara.

Her uncle again fondly kissed her, as h
handed her into her carriage; and his li
trembled as "God bless you, my dear child
hung upon them. Sir James gaily sprang in-
the door was closed—and even the sounds of t
wheels were soon lost on the listening ears th
were left behind.

Never had Lady St. Clair found it mo
difficult to sustain the brilliant flow of h
spirits than on this eventful day, when she lo
from her own home the interesting being, wh
had now for many months embellished it wi

beauty and varied accomplishments, while endeared it with her warm, affectionate ners.

was impossible to be daily domesticated Clara Cameron, or, as we must now call Lady Eastham, without becoming fondly hed to her. There was a playfulness in manners, and a depth of feeling in her ; which formed a character irresistibly ctive. Far different from the common of pretty girls ; there was an intellect and nd which rendered her constantly agreeable companion, while she was loved as a l. It is true a sadness would sometimes over her expressive features, but she never ed it to linger there, or to vary the unal-le sweetness of her temper.

las, thought Lady St. Clair, as she folded beloved niece in a parting embrace, alas ! her destiny will not be as happy as it is ant. This warm heart was made for all fondest ties of our nature, not for those

which now alone will father her; but it is the hand of destiny. May she fulfil hers as calmly and contentedly as I do mine! And thus thinking, the young Countess wiped the traces of tears from her eyes, and rejoined her company, with which she had filled the house for some time yet to come. Foreseeing the void which Clara must make in their domestic circle, the pleasantest of their acquaintances were to stay for some time at St. Claire Park.

CHAPTER II.

"Is my master and his wife coming?
Oh, ay, Curtis, ay, and therefore fire! fire!
Cast on no water. Do you hear, ho! you must meet
My master to countenance my mistress."

SHAKSPEARE.

"Grand Dieu! dit-elle, en rassemblant ses idées,
Est-il bien vrai que je suis mariée?"

CAROLINE DE LICHFIELD.

It was the second day of Sir James and Lady Eastham's bridal journey, and a pause of some continuance had occurred in their conversation, when the bridegroom, rising from his

corner of the carriage, and wiping off the mist which had thickened on the glass near him, looked attentively out of the window. In a few minutes, he exclaimed,

"There is a cat, by Jove! that goes for ten."

"What on earth do you mean?" said the astonished bride.

"Oh, I forgot I was travelling with you," replied Sir James; "but I will tell you the game, it's a capital plan to get through a journey, I assure you. When the Duke of —— and I go to Newmarket together, we always pass the time in some such way. To be sure, heavy bets depend upon which wins, and that adds to the excitement and fun of the thing; but perhaps it will do without; we'll try at all events, and I dare say we shall get on better; after all it's but stupid work, travelling along for days together, boxed up inside a carriage."

Clara half sighed at the contrast to her once-formed notions of a day after marriage; but, *n'importe*, this suits me now much better

ıan anything approaching to sentiment or ɔmance; then continued her thoughts aloud.

"Well, Sir James, teach me your method of ıavelling made easy; I do believe we were both early asleep."

"To begin then, rub the glass on your side .ean too, that you can keep a sharp look out, ıd we may start fair. Every living thing on ɔur side, man, woman, child, animal, bird or ısect, counts for one each, except a cat ten, ı old woman with a red cloak on, ten, and a ɔnkey, ten; whichever counts most in a quarter ' an hour, wins—now for it by my watch."

Clara entered into the absurdity of the inven- ɔn, and laughing over the fairness of which le, birds flying past them belonged to, and nilar points at issue, the quarter of an hour ssed quickly, and Clara was declared the nner.

Then a shower of rain coming on, reminded r James that another of their sporting ex- dients, was to bet on the drops of water run-

ning down the window, or when it grew dark; watching how many times the wheels struck fire in passing over flints, and thus his reminiscences turning to his favourite subject, sporting, he was soon interested and deep in the details of his horses or his dogs, which had won at Newmarket, or elsewhere.

Clara was a good listener, and, when they stopped for dinner and the night at one of those luxurious inns on the great roads, of which England may well be proud, and found a good fire and elegantly-furnished rooms awaiting them, with every comfort it was possible to desire; Sir James, in high spirits, rubbed his hands, and declared he had never liked travelling before, but really such a companion made every thing charming.

The next day passed equally well, and the bridegroom was delighted to find his bride liked the plan of returning to Eastham for Christmas, to spend that cheerful season in right old English hospitality. She even herself proposed

at they should give a tenant's ball, and preside emselves, which was an idea quite after Sir mes's own heart, and he called himself the ckiest fellow in existence, not only to have a autiful wife, but one who would condescend to admired in the country, as well as at Almack's. The third evening brought them to their use in Grosvenor Square, where the *élite* of eir establishment from Eastham Court were ranged to receive their lady. Her kind and ntle character was already well known, and eir respectful salutations and cheerful smiles hich greeted her arrival, were for once sincere. The old housekeeper, who had grown gray in e service of the Eastham family, humbly hoped r lady would find things as comfortable as the ortness of the time, and the scantiness of the niture would permit.

Lady Eastham kindly shook the old woman's nd, and said "she was sure to be quite isfied."

"Well, God bless her sweet pretty face,"

said the old woman, as she retired; "I am sure she deserves to be happy, and I do think Sir James will be a good husband to her, for he has his heart in the right place, though he may have been a little wild like in former years; and he looks so merry, and so proud of her now, it's a pleasure to see him, that it is."

Clara found everything she could wish in their town residence for their present plan of seclusion; and the next morning, and the next, and the next, there was ample employment in arranging everything for re-furnishing the house, which Mr. ——, the famous upholsterer, assured them should be a perfect shrine of elegance, when they returned in May.

And well might he so promise, for Sir James gave him *carte blanche* as to expense, and his known experience in those matters, guided by Clara's eye and taste, promised to make these splendidly-sized rooms, when thus furnished, a fit abode for the very goddess of fashion the ensuing season.

There was a dark recess in one of the drawing-oms, which Clara was planning to light, and t up as a Turkish tent. The idea was eagerly aught up as charming, by the skilful man of usiness, and he only demurred as to expense, hen Sir James, coming up, settled the matter t once, by desiring "that everything my Lady ancied should be done, and d—— the expense." Of course, the well-pleased upholsterer bowed, nd my Lady was hurried off by the eager Baronet, to look at a notion of his own, for building a conservatory, which should open out of the other drawing-room.

In this manner, and in seeing many of the London sights, which were all strange to Clara, uch as the Tower, St. Paul's, &c. &c., and in he evenings going quietly, and at this season, of ourse without the chance of falling in with any f their acquaintance, to the few places of amusenent which were open, passed the honeymoon; nd they only returned to their country place in ime to prepare their Christmas festivities, which

were to be especially brilliant, in honour of the marriage.

As the young mistress of Eastham Ca was handed by her admiring husband from the travelling-carriage into the splendid mansion now her own, it may be pardonable if a slight feeling of gratified pride swelled her bosom. She was surely now in possession of all that the ambition of woman could desire, and she fain persuaded herself that she must be happy.

One of her first pleasures was to seek the warm welcome of her affectionate relations, at St. Clair Park, and her watchful aunt most heartily rejoiced when she saw the contented look and buoyant step with which the young bride re turned among them, and evidently entered wit real pleasure and zest into all Sir James's plan for roast beef and plum puddings, and dancing and music, with which to regale and amuse their numerous dependants.

The house itself too, was a great source bot of occupation and delight to her, and one i

which her husband could cordially join. She would not wish to alter the profusion of splendid old furniture which abounded in every room, but a little modern taste greatly added to the comfort, as well as elegance of the arrangement. And after a wet morning, employed in re-adjusting her favourite sitting-room, she and Sir James sat down in almost breathless, though well-satisfied, approbation of the improvement they had created in its appearance.

CHAPTER III.

"Come hither, come hither, by night and by day,
We linger in pleasures that never are gone;
Like the waves of the summer, as one dies away,
Another as sweet and as shining comes on."

LALLA ROOKH.

"Ma ti ricordi ancora le sue sembionze?
Io l'ho presente."

OLIMPIADE.

We pass briefly over an interval of rath more than two years, which Clara spe alternately in the pleasures of the country a of London. Her first arrival at home,

stham Court, was celebrated by a succession brilliant *fêtes*, for which the fine old mansion, h its extensive suites of rooms, was admirably apted. Their first entertainments were to ir tenantry and dependants, when Sir James ried more than ever in his selection of a fe. Himself, a true English country gentleman, he rejoiced that he had no mere fine lady r his wife, who would laugh at the awkwardss of the farmers' wives and daughters, and int at the idea of dancing down a long untry-dance in their great hall, with no other amonds shining round, than the bright eyes d happy faces which they were entertaining.

Lady Eastham was a very different character this: in London she could appreciate the ace and the polish of the circle in which she oved, and was herself one of the brightest naments, but at Eastham Court she could re herself up to all the enjoyment of a untry life, and willingly join in their less ined amusements.

Sir James never felt more proud of his wife, than when he saw her making all around them happy and diffusing her sweet smile, which was truly

"Lampeggiæ dell' angelico riso!"

upon all their delighted Christmas guests.

If the aristocracy of England would oftener follow the plan of occasionally associating themselves with their tenants and dependants, and drawing once more the attachment of the feudal days around them, we should much seldomer hear of discontent and turbulence among the lower orders, and Chartism and Radicalism would die away in the land.

Aristocracy would not be held up as a bugbear but as a station in life to bestow happiness and enjoyments on those beneath them, to add to the respectability of their amusements, not to overrule and subdue them. No English landlords have their rents paid so well, as those who take a *pleasure* and do not

merely condescend to seek the happiness of their tenantry, and to make their interests mutual.

To prove this, it would only be necessary to take a glimpse of the different expression of the homely though honest features of the country congregations, assembled in the respective village churches attended by the families from Kingsland House, St. Clair Park, and Eastham Court.

The first would drive up in stately grandeur, and among the humble and estranged bows and curtseys of the peasantry and farmers, walk on in elevated dignity to a pew carefully curtained off and fitted up with half the luxuries of a modern drawing-room, apart from the rest of the congregation. On returning, they were again objects to stare at, and the four prancing horses and the whip of the coachman, who learned from his superiors to keep all beneath him in order, and to consult only his own convenience, would put to rout many a cheer-

ful group of children assembled around the gate.

The parish-church, attended by both the families from St. Clair Park and Eastham Court, presented a very different picture. The beautiful countess and her stately lord, however proud of their ancient nobility, never showed it by littleness of mind; the most gentle and benevolent of Lady Bountifuls, with none of the business of ostentatious charity; and the most considerate and generous of landlords, they were both equally beloved and respected.

Lady Eastham followed the same plan, and by no means detracted from the already well-merited popularity of Sir James. She followed Lady St. Clair's example of coming to church with the least possible show of ostentation, and if the day were fine she generally preferred a walk, across the park, and a few additional green fields to the having any carriage whatever, but when the weather made one necessary, the plainest and most useful was always selected.

The cheerful groups of their tenantry and work-people would smilingly press forward to hope my lady was "well and hearty," and reply to kind inquiries after their own families, which in sickness were sure to receive every little luxury from the Park, or the Court.

The fine Gothic architecture of the old church was not outraged by any modern innovations erected by the pews of the rich proprietors. They were placed alike in the middle aisle fronting the pulpit, and with no difference except in dimensions from all the others in the place devoted to the worship of God, and where all met on equal terms before the throne of a heavenly father.

But the wedding festivities at Eastham Court were not bounded by rejoicings among their own immediate people, but were followed by a gay succession of parties from the neighbourhood, varied by company staying in the house from a greater distance.

Lady Eastham here also performed the

[illegible] and the Miss Williamsons were not disappointed in a great acceleration of gaiety to the neighbourhood. Masquerades, fancy-balls, and even some amateur plays were got up to vary the round of country amusements, and Lady Stavordale was sometimes permitted for a week together to exchange the dull monotony of her family circle, for the cheerful atmosphere of Eastham Court, though always taking care to bring her darling child, and not leave him to the chill of the home she herself so willingly escaped from.

The scene we now come to is London, and the middle of the second season in which Lady Eastham had divided with her aunt, the supremacy in fashionable life.

Their houses were the most splendid, their parties the most *recherchées*, their own personal charms the most admired. The St. Clair bonnet, or the Eastham cap, was sure to take with all the rest of the world, though on many

a dowdy figure no one could have recognised the shape which looked so well on these peerless leaders of fashion.

Cecil Aston had made all the figure in political life which Lord St. Clair had predicted, was already high in office, and was quite what is called "a rising man." In losing the first god of his idolatry, he had made ambition the second, and from her received rewarding smiles. He had learned to look on Clara with only the interest of a friend, and he watched with satisfaction the unaltered serenity of her countenance, which, if it told not of happiness, yet gave no reason to suspect any latent worm sapped the flowers of amusement and gaiety.

Sir James remained the same kind, though unsentimental husband, and evidently was as proud as ever of his young wife, who continued always to consult his tastes as much as possible, and to reward him for passing the London season in a round of amusements little consonant with his previous habits, by making their

London hours infringe as little as might be with his ideas of home comfort.

Perhaps some lurking vanity, too, for the retaining her youthful freshness of appearance, induced her to continue the practice of either an early walk or ride in the parks, with Sir James, while others of the fashionable world were wasting their time, and diminishing their beauty in slumbers, till the freshness of morning had long subsided from the air.

If walking, Lord St. Clair was generally their companion; and it was a bright July morning, but before the heat had become oppressive, that the trio we have mentioned, bent their steps from Grosvenor Square to the banks of the Serpentine, when the Earl continued to indulge Banquo with his morning bath.

"There is that beautiful child again," said Lady Eastham; "I am no observer general of children, but there is something to me wonderfully attractive in this one's whole appearance there seems a something familiar to me in h

large dark eyes, and as if I already knew and loved her. The two nurses and the pretty pony phaëton, with an Earl's coronet, always in waiting lest the little creature should be tired with walking, show she is of gentle blood. The mother, I suppose, is among the listless votaries of fashion, as she is never tempted out at this hour, even by that endearing-looking child. But the servants are in mourning; perhaps, poor thing, it has no mother. Do let us ask whose it is."

Although Lady Eastham was always plainly and simply dressed for these early morning excursions, there was an air of elegance about her which could not be mistaken, and Lord St. Clair was a true scion of the noble stock from which he sprang. Though now declining into the vale of years, there were still the remains of much manly beauty, and that indescribable look which at once bespoke him one of England's boasted peers.

The elderly nurse, to whom Clara spoke,

curtseyed respectfully to the question, of whose was that beautiful child, and in rather an Irish accent replied:

"Lord Desmond's, my Lady. This large dog has long been Lady Mary's admiration; and perhaps now, you have been so good as to notice her, you would allow the little lady to see it nearer. Being an only child, and having lost her mother, she is sadly indulged; and has cried several times, because she wanted to call the dog, and I would not let her, telling her it was not good manners to do so, unless she knew the gentlefolks to whom it belonged. One morning, she almost persuaded my Lord to come with her to see if he knew the owners of this fine dog, which she keeps talking of all day long, but his Lordship was called away by some business; and, since my poor Lady's death, he never seems to like going out anywhere, and is generally shut up at home."

"I am sure," said Lord St. Clair, "a child of the Earl of Desmond's well deserves to pat

my favourite Banquo. Come here, sir, and let this little girl play with you."

A command the sensible and well-trained animal instantly obeyed; and, standing perfectly still, let Lady Mary first touch his soft, black curls, and then bury her laughing face in his shaggy sides.

"Yes, my Lord," said the loquacious Irish nurse, "you may indeed speak so of the Earl of Desmond, for many is the Irish heart would kneel down to worship him almost. No one knows all the good he does in Ireland! and they tell me, for I don't pretend to understand such matters, that he is trying all he can in the Parliament House to get our poor injured country righted. Bless his noble heart! I wish there were more like him. But alack, Sir, he's not happy himself, I am very sure; he always looks so sad and sorrowful like. To be sure it was a melancholy thing to lose the Countess so soon after this little lady was born; but I hope in time he'll overgrow that, let alone however

happy they might be; but I never knew much of the Countess, only just coming to be nurse before she was confined, poor thing! She was young, and seemingly healthy then, and little thought how soon consumption was coming on. But God's will be done! I am sure, Lady Mary, I hope you will thank this gentleman very prettily for making his dog stand so gentle and good-tempered for you to play with him."

After a protracted interview with the gratified child, they pursued their way homeward, Lord St. Clair descanting on the praises of the Earl of Desmond, who was the most distinguished speaker in the House of Lords, and an uncompromising defender of his unfortunate country. Some of his speeches on Irish affairs had gained him the most deafening applause; and even those who condemned his politics, were obliged to confess he was the most splendid orator for years who had appeared in their House.

He had completely become the lion of the day, and was courted alike by ladies to their balls, and politicians to their dinners; but he declined all, except the decided Cabinet parties, when, as a prominent leader on the Ministerial side, his company could not be dispensed with. He was in vain asked to any others, and obtained the name of a decided misanthrope, and woman-hater. His whole soul seemed absorbed in the strife of political debate, and in the able championship of freedom and equality of religious and civil rights for his countrymen.

Such a character was sure to be appreciated by Lord St. Clair, but he vainly sought his acquaintance beyond the meeting at clubs, or Ministerial dinners. He seemed carefully to avoid all private society; and, though he had returned Lord St. Clair's call, it was only by leaving his card, when he knew him to be out. Sometimes Lord St. Clair had been inclined to take offence at this determined opposition to all

his advances towards intimacy, but when h
saw the same line of conduct was persevered
to all, and still more when he was within t
fascination of his manners and personal a
pearance, he forgot all feelings of vexation, a
yielded himself to the extraordinary cha
which seemed to surround him. The ca
which the old Irish nurse assigned for his m
lancholy and abstraction from society, seem
to throw a new and yet more interesting lig
on his character; and Lord St. Clair felt mo
and more determined, after this morning's inte
view in the park, to seek an acquaintance whic
had hitherto proved so fruitless.

When he returned home, he related wit
unwonted interest to Lady St. Clair their littl
adventure in the park with Lord Desmond'
beautiful child, and requested that if ever sh
met the Earl in society, she would join he
influence to his, to withdraw him from th
melancholy which he seemed resolved upo
indulging in; but the Countess gave him littl

hopes of success, as she said she heard it constantly lamented that the yet young and eminently attractive Lord Desmond could be courted into no general society, and seemed only alive to his politics and his little girl, of whom he was known to be passionately fond.

CHAPTER IV.

"She marked that figure's grace,
Improved but by the hand of time—that bronzed expressive face—
Gazed on that dark soul-speaking eye—that brow of intellect,
Shaded, not hid, by those soft curls of richest raven jet.

"These chiselled lips, that half in play, but more than half in scorn,
Curled all so proudly—and that smile, perhaps their greatest charm;
Those small, fine features, breathing, in their every movement, some
Conviction that their owner's mind could be no common one."

DUBLIN REVIEW.

CLARA and Lady St. Clair had agreed to go together, and while away an hour at the Exhibi-

tion of Pictures at the Royal Academy, which this year contained a full-length portrait of Lady Eastham, and, being painted by an eminent artist, and a most striking likeness, was considered the great attraction to the rooms.

Though it had now been exhibited more than two months, it was still an object of general attention, and the fascinating beauty of the original had retained all its native charm on the canvas of the painter. Clara's own smile played round the mouth, and the expression of her dark eyes was caught while sparkling with animation, not the cold unimpassioned look which now more frequently marked them.

Lady Eastham had remained in another part of the room, talking to some acquaintance she met with, while Lady St. Clair went to the more crowded part, round Clara's picture; in a few minutes she returned, and, taking Lady Eastham's arm, begged for once she would break through her dislike of being stared at as the original of the picture, and

venture within its precints, to see the most striking looking person who was standing before it, with folded arms, and perfectly regardless of everything else around. "I am sure, too," added the Countess, "he is some one worth attracting, for I never saw a more *distingué* and patrician air; it is strange we have never met him in society, and that we have not, I am certain. Once seen, he could not be forgotten. Do, Clara, come and tell me if you know him, and if his admiration is so great of the pictured form, it is only kind and considerate just to give him a peep at the fair original; perhaps, too, you may know him, though I do not; he is just the sort of person I should like to be introduced to; his is the very head I am wanting for a *tableau* at one of my next parties; I declare, I would give the world to know him."

Lady Eastham followed the guidance of her friend, and, as the crowd partly dispersed to make way for them, they still saw the stranger retaining his place before the picture.

The instant his figure caught Clara's eye, a cold chill passed over her, and, with a trembling voice, she stammered out.

"I am very faint, Contessa, this heat is too oppressive. Let us go away."

The tones, however low, seemed instantly to catch the stranger's ear: with a sudden start, he turned and fixed his eager look on Clara, then hurried hastily away.

She met that eagle eye, and sank senseless into the arms of the Countess. Water was speedily procured, and, with a desperate energy, she seemed struggling with her feelings. For a moment only had they overcome her. Thanking those around with her natural grace of manner, and calmly attributing her sudden faintness to the heat of the room, she begged Lady St. Clair to return home immediately.

Seated in the carriage, Clara pulled down the blind at her side, and for a few minutes, passing her hand over her face, she was absolved in mental abstraction. She then removed her

hand, and, with her usual serenity of features, smiled on the anxious face of the Countess.

"Dearest Contessa, forget this momentary weakness; it is over now; the sight of him came so suddenly, so unexpectedly, upon me; I was unprepared for the conflict with my feelings. I need not tell you who he was: but, good God, how changed! I could not have thought it possible that a few years could so completely have erased all traces of youth. If you admired him now, think what he must have been in former days, when happiness and health glowed on that cheek, now so pale and careworn; but no more. We shall not, I trust, meet again, but if we do, it will not come so suddenly, so unexpectedly, and you shall never again blush for my weakness. Thank God! he was gone and did not see it."

"Call it not weakness, dearest," said the sympathizing Countess; "Oh! call it no weakness, or if you do, surely one well excusable in woman's nature. Have you not struggled

with every recollection of the past: have you not been the best of wives to one of the proudest and kindest of English husbands, one whom you make completely happy? If you will not bear this witness to your own character, I will do it for you."

"Thanks, thanks, kindest of friends!" replied Clara; "you at least will ever judge me favourably, and Heaven knows I have contended against every thought which might be faithless to the truth I owe my husband And, if this fatal image has ever crossed my mind, it has only been in midnight slumbers, when sometimes, in spite of myself,

> 'I hear a voice I would not hear,
> A voice that now might well be still!'

But now to cross my waking path! O God! spare me from again seeing that phantom of the past, for phantom and less than nothing must that form now be to me. Doubly, doubly barred, by his vows and mine, must our lives be

ever separated. But I fear me, it will be long ere I succeed in driving that altered face, that agonizing look, from my remembrance. Dearest Contessa, did you see it—did you observe how careworn and sad he looked? And yet how much of manly fortitude was imprinted on that noble brow. This once, this once only, let me talk of him to you, and then the silence of death shall again close my lips; would to God it could my heart also! Do you remember when I first and only mentioned his name to you—that kind look tells me—yes! How many days, and months, and even years, have passed since then, but on me, unless my glass tells a flattering tale, they have passed with lighter traces than with him; he is far more altered than I can be."

"Wonder not at this," replied the Countess; "remember, you have had nothing to reproach yourself with; it was not you who severed the sacred bonds of love; you had only to acquiesce, and your woman's pride would aid you in the struggle. Do not now, dearest, shrink from

ıe victory you have gained over yourself, over ven destiny itself. Fear not the encountering ıim again: the rapidity with which he fled your resence showed the breaking of his promise vas involuntary, and we must forgive him the veakness, if weakness it can be called, of seeking the melancholy gratification of gazing on vour picture; for I can well imagine how bitter nust be his feelings, who might have called uch a prize his own, and lost it by his own folly. And now, love, let us hasten home, and order ur horses for a good long ride, beyond the ach of fashionable intruders. A canter on our fine Arab will do you more good than anyıing. Let me prescribe for you."

"You have hit upon my cure admirably; yes, ride on that beautiful animal will remind me ıore than anything of my liege Lord, and all ıe kindness he lavishes on me; shall I repay : by repinings, and thinking of an *ignis fatuus*, vhich will never again, it is to be hoped, appear efore me? As you say, I believe the now doing

so was involuntary, and will doubtless never b
repeated. And now a long farewell to this hate
ful subject. I am ashamed of myself for havin
thus dwelt on it so long, but for the future i
shall be banished from our conversations, onl
one thing may I not ask? If you meet hi
again, should you know him, and will you te
me if you do?"

"Dearest, I promise. Should I know him
To be sure I should, even among a thousand, a
I told you when I first saw him, little thinkin
who he was, that his was a form never to b
forgotten. You might well call him pre-eminent
handsome; there is not a man in London
compare to him; but here we are at yo
door; I will step across to mine, and order m
horse, do you the same for yours. *Adio,*
reverdervi carissima."

CHAPTER V.

"En songeant il faut qu'on l'oublie, ou s'en souvient."

MONTCRIEF.

"Sir, your fortune's ruined, if you are not married."

SHERIDAN.

SEVERAL weeks elapsed, and this vision of the past never more crossed Clara's path. In spite of herself, the idea would haunt her, and a nameless dread seemed to hang over her spirits, lest in the crowds of the Park, or in the gayer precincts of the Opera, or at any place of public amusement, this never-to-be-forgotten figure should again meet her sight.

But the fear was unrealized, and our heroine was beginning to lose the idea, and to look with something approaching to interest and pleasure to a splendid ball which she was soon to give.

She was one morning arranging with Lady St. Clair to whom cards should be sent, when Sir James entered the room, and asked for one for Lord Desmond.

"Why, my dear Sir James," said Lady Eastham, "you might as well send one to the Grand Sultan himself, and with more chance of his coming express to our *gala*; you know Lord Desmond persists in visiting no where—he has refused all your invitations to dinner, and will never addle his political brains by putting them into such a vortex of gaiety as I hope this will be."

"Well, never mind, Clara, by Jove! I'll try this once. 'Faint heart never won fair lady,' and perhaps the old adage may prove true for statesmen as well; so fill up a card in your very prettiest handwriting. I can scarcely believe

that stately grave fellow was once my fag at Eton, and the veriest imp of mischief, though he was always a devilish clever boy, if he chose to apply. I should not have known him again, but he at once recognised me, when Lord St. Clair persuaded me to go one night to hear a famous debate in the House of Lords. It was expected he would make one of his crack speeches, and so he did. At first, the whole thing was a long tiresome business to my taste, though really when Lord Desmond's fine mellow tones came on my ear, and I heard his impassioned flow of eloquence, I quite woke up from the nap I was having, and wished you, Clara, could have been there, for it certainly was a splendid speech, and you like that kind of thing. He afterwards came round and spoke to me, and reminded me of some Eton scrapes I had got him out of—he really is a good fellow, and I wish he was not so engrossed in politics; he seems to care for nothing else now, except his little girl. I think he does like her,

for when I told him of your admiration of her in the Park, he really looked animated and pleased, though when I asked him to come himself and be introduced to you, he looked as cold and abstracted as ever again, and said he never went into ladies' society: it broke into his studies, and disturbed his regular rules. A stupid hard life he must have of it; however, if he like fame, he has got that to his heart's content, and there seems no doubt he will be the next Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, when one is appointed. By Jove! he'll enact the King to perfection, and redress poor Ireland's wrongs into the bargain. But I must not stand prating here any longer, I shall be too late; so give me the card, I will leave it myself as I pass his house on my way to Tattersall's."

"I really wish," said Lady St. Clair, as Sir James left the room, "it were possible by any means to tempt this great lion of public notoriety to bless us poor women with a sight even of his renowned person. Lord St. Clair says he is

remarkably handsome and pleasing in his manners; it is a perfect shame to waste the good gifts of nature thus on a surly politician."

"Nay," replied Clara, laughing; "I never heard he was surly—I will take up the cudgels of defence for the absent. All the men who know him, speak in raptures of his agreeableness—it certainly is tantalizing to hear for ever of such a wondrous prodigy, and never even get a glimpse of him. It is singular that he is never by any chance to be met with any where!"

"I suppose, Clara, you will ask the Kingsland family to your ball?" said Lady St. Clair. "It is true they are dreadful bores, but it will not do to exclude all who come under that denomination."

"No, indeed, or I fear our visiting lists might lose some of their greatest names. But positively the little Marchioness of Stavordale is a redeeming point for all the family—I think she grows more agreeable every time I see her;

and at Almack's last week she was so becom-
ingly dressed, she looked almost handsome."

"And do you know," demanded Lady S
Clair, "to whose taste she is indebted for th
'becoming dress?'"

"No; truly, I have no idea on the subjec
but I should certainly say she had no assistan
from her dowdy sisters-in-law. It is a decid
misfortune to have no eye for colours, and to
dress as ill as the Ladies Kingsland always do.
Who but themselves could think of putt-ing
pink roses into red hair? And I actually saw
them once in a green dress and blue bonnet!"

"Certainly, I cannot admire their usual style
of habiliments," said the Countess; "and Lady
Stavordale is too apt to be gaudy in hers to
please me, and it was the unusual simplicity of
her attire, though equally handsome and exp-en-
sive, which struck me the other night as well as
you; and, when I complimented her on the
good effect, she let me into the secret by

innocently avowing that Ernest Cavendish helped her in the choice, and told her what ornaments to wear with it."

"Ernest Cavendish! You astonish one, Contessa! I had no idea he had advanced to these terms of intimacy."

"Ah! dear Clara, you have not been so many years in the world of fashion as I have, else would you cease to wonder at such things as these. Don't you remember you once feared dreadfully for the havoc this redoubtable *cavalier servente* was to make in either my poor heart, or fame? But both have escaped unscathed, and, when he found me beyond his reach, you fortunately became a married woman just in time to share his attentions, and our being so much together was a lucky excuse for his exclusive *devoirs* to me wearing off. I don't think he ever had much hope of making any impression on your flinty heart; but, nevertheless, you are the fashion."

"If I have any insight into his motives, or

actions—and I think I have some—he is now laying regular siege to the poor little Marchioness, and I fear with some chance of success."

"Surely, surely," said Lady Eastham, "you cannot mean all your words would imply! You do not really think that Ernest Cavendish loves Lady Stavordale?"

"Loves her!—nay, that's quite a different thing. I neither said nor thought that. But that she does not love him I am by no means sure, and this will answer his purpose quite as well. You know he has always been poor, and, if report do not greatly belie him, he has lately lost much larger sums at the gaming-table than he can afford. Now, you know Lady Stavordale is immensely rich. Her old father died last year, and left the whole of his property entirely at her own disposal, free from all control of her husband's. The poor man had sold his daughter for a coronet, but when he found the wretched life she led in the august

family he had married her into, and that even the strawberry leaves of a duke might encircle plebeian brains beneath, he repented of the misery he had ambitiously brought upon his only child, and determined to counteract it as much as now laid in his power by making a will so guardedly worded, that it is impossible for the Marquis to touch any of her money, and specifically mentioning that if strong circumstances should induce her to separate from him, the half of the property shall go to her children by that marriage, and the remainder be under her sole and entire disposal. So you see it would be no portionless wife that Ernest Cavendish would receive, could he persuade her to throw herself into his arms; and with a home such as hers, there is no knowing how great the temptation may be."

"There is, I fear, too much truth in what you say," rejoined Clara, "although I had never previously remarked anything particular in his attentions to Lady Stavordale. Now, that you

draw me to think of it, he certainly has been more than usually assiduous in that quarter, and has lately gone to several of their humdrum, formal parties, which he used to rail against as so unbearable."

"I can easily imagine there must be something particularly seductive in his winning and engrossing attentions to one who has so little of even common courtesy at home. Accustomed to have all she says and does ridiculed, and her wishes never consulted in anything, even about her child, they endeavour to make a cipher of her; the contrast of the insinuating watchfulness of Ernest Cavendish, who knows so well how to turn everything to his own advantage, must certainly make a more than common impression; and, as it may answer his purpose to do so, there is no knowing how it may end."

CHAPTER VI.

"Her cheek was pale, but all composed—his hand had touched her own,
That touch—it waken'd feelings which she numbered with the dead,
That touch—what wild tumultuous thoughts within her breast it spread!
All calmly then she turn'd from him, but still throughout her frame,
Now ever and anon that touch's memory came."

DUBLIN REVIEW.

THE night of the ball in question arrived in due course of time. Lady Georgiana Selby had become Captain Macdonald's wife a few months after acting as bridesmaid to Lady

Eastham, and their intimacy had increased since their marriage rather than diminished. Circumstances still threw them frequently together, for, as Captain Macdonald's regiment was generally either in London or its environs, and they had not fortune enough to attempt any establishment beyond what comfort demanded, Clara was most happy to be useful to Lady Georgiana, by having a ticket for her box at the Opera, or a seat in her carriage for a morning drive, always at her service.

The young wife was just recovered from her confinement, and Captain Macdonald's regiment being now stationed at Windsor, she, with her husband and child, were on a visit of a few days to Sir James and Lady Eastham.

The two friends left the dining-room early, to see the effect of a new chandelier in one of the large drawing-rooms, which was arranged for dancing. Weippert's band had already arrived, and a lively air caught their ear as they entered the yet empty suite of rooms. Everything was

in excellent order, and the ladies had only time to add to the richness of their dinner-costume before the rattling of carriages and long reverberating knocks of the footmen told the commencement of arrivals had begun.

It was towards the middle of the evening, and when the rooms were crowded with the gay, the beautiful, the great, that a name yet more distinguished was whispered about; and "Lord Desmond is really in the rooms," was buzzed about, and caught Lady Eastham's ear, as she sat down from waltzing with Ernest Cavendish, who, however his serious attentions might now be devoted elsewhere, knew that she and her aunt were the most admired women in London; and it was good taste to be seen in their train.

"I do congratulate you," said the wily flatterer, "if Lord Desmond, the proud, the unbending, the politician, has condescended to enter the precincts of a ball-room; but all alike

must have to dance such as yours, Donna [illegible]."

"Indeed," replied Lady Eastham, "you give me credit for more than I deserve, for Lord Desmond has never yet seen the wondrous charms you talk of: so I cannot be the attraction here. Far more likely political business has brought him to look for some of his colleagues; for all are not such women and ball-haters as he professes to be. But see, Lady Stavordale is looking for you, her recreant partner, in the galloppade, which is beginning. I shall rest during this dance, or rather tire myself, by talking to some humdrums."

She then passed into the next room, and was prosing with a Dowager Marchioness, when Sir James came eagerly up:

"Well, Clara, I have succeeded at last; Desmond has really come. I am delighted, too, to see you, my love, in such excellent looks; these last few weeks you have been

fagged and pale, but now you are quite yourself again. I shall be proud to introduce such a wife to the most fastidious man in England."

These words were uttered, as placing Clara's rm within his own, he led her to the other de of the room, where he had left Lord Desond; but, missing him in the crowd, he ited his wife by Lady St. Clair, and went in urch of his lost prize, for so he justly esteemed e man who now for the first time honoured a ndon party with his presence. Clara, too, s inwardly gratified by this additional *éclat* her ball, besides feeling some womanly riosity to see this wondrous man, who was arming all and everybody by his eloquence.

She was looking for Sir James's return with is Lion of the day, Cecil Aston having taken ady St. Clair to join the dancers, when, suddenly, from the other end of the room, an apparition met her sight, which set every pulse in motion. She could almost have screamed, but

this time she felt no symptoms of faintness, and this was no place for any ebullition of feeling, nor did he deserve any, who could thus obtrude himself, as it were, into the sanctity of her own home; and after solemnly promising never to cross her path, thus willingly intrude himself into her presence. Their first meeting was accidental, he could not then be blamed, but now, she had no further time for thought, for he now perceived her, and bent his steps that way.

"Thank God!" she inwardly ejaculated, "I am in a quiet corner alone, and I will show him, I can bear the meeting he has thus wantonly and cruelly exposed me to."

The next moment, the beloved of her youthful heart stood before her. The sofa she was sitting on was retired from the crowd around, and no one seemed looking that way. Nothing comes so near to a *tête-à-tête* as a large party, and this night the extensive suite of rooms were full, even to overflowing.

The tones of a voice once so dear, could reach her heart though unheard by others.

"If you had known the agony you cause me, you would not, Clara, have asked me here, but I come at your bidding; yes, even to see you in another's home, the wife of another—you bade me come—now you may triumph at the sorrow of my soul."

"Good God!" said the astonished lady; "you are under some strange delusion. I bid you come! Heaven knows I would have shunned you as the deadliest enemy of my peace!"

"Nay, say not this—your very handwriting is a treasure to me now—many dreary years have passed since it met my eye; even this card of ceremony is dear to me; look at this invitation, you cannot deny your own handwriting."

Clara took one of the printed cards for her ball from his hand; it was filled up by herself to the Earl of Desmond.

"This most surely I wrote, and I hear Lord Desmond is in the room, but I have not yet been introduced to him."

The face before her grew yet paler, and violent emotion quivered through his frame.

"Did you not know my name was changed? Do you not know that Lord Desmond stands before you?"

"Good Heavens! no—how could I have imagined so strange a thing—but sit down—we have met, it cannot now be avoided—we must be friends; William, I forgive you, let the past be as if it had never been. Remember, none but Lady St. Clair is aware that we ever met before; she knew the cause of my surprise at the Exhibition, and will surely recognise you again; but with *her* our secret will be safe."

Sir James at this moment returned from his fruitless search of Lord Desmond, and was not a little surprised to find him already conversing with Lady Eastham.

"Why, my dear Lord," said the Baronet; "I have been seeking you everywhere, to introduce you to my Lady fair; who has done this for me?"

"The painter of that lovely picture in the

Exhibition. After seeing that, I could not doubt of who was the original, and I ventured to introduce myself to Lady Eastham."

The words of Lord Desmond were calm and unimpassioned, and the tone of tender emotion was changed for cold indifference. All traces of agitation had passed away from his fine features, and the lover of former days was merged in the grave and almost stately exterior of the leader of cabinets, and the most prominent of statesmen. He still retained his seat by Clara's side, and Sir James, leaning over the other end of the sofa, they were thus conversing on the common subjects of the day, when a favourite waltz struck on Clara's ear; she could not resist a glance at Lord Desmond; in former years, they had often danced it together—he caught the expression of her eye, and his told the remembrance was mutual.

"Sir James, what will the world say if the grave politician is seen among that whirling ever for a moment felt any want of ardour in

throng? It is long since my foot has trod that lively measure, but, methinks if Lady Eastham would honour me so far, I would try with her if former lessons are still remembered."

The allusion was but too well understood by the throbbing heart to which it was addressed. A strange infatuation seemed to lead them both on to the trial of their strength of endurance, and Clara rose with a smiling face, but, Heaven knows, with feelings in dire contradiction to her personal appearance.

She took Lord Desmond's arm, and with only a firmer and a prouder step than was her wont, for the playing a part is generally over-acted, they passed into the next apartment.

Sir James gazed after his wife and noble friend with honest feelings of delight. Never did man possess a kinder heart than Sir James Eastham; and from the day of her marriage, Clara had never heard a word approaching to harshness: on the contrary, all she did was always the wisest, and the best. It is true, he had not one grain of sentiment in his composition, and

his wife's love for him, or suspected that she had the power of loving very differently to any feeling he could call forth. She was always sweet-tempered, and ready to enter into his amusements; she was always, in his eyes at least, and generally in those of others, wherever they went, the most beautiful and elegant woman in the room. In the Park, she was the best rider, and had the finest horse; what more could he desire in a wife? Certainly nothing according to his ideas of married life, and Sir James Eastham was a perfectly happy man.

Occasionally, a shade of disappointment had crossed his mind at there being as yet no promise of an heir, but that was all in good time, and he thoroughly consoled himself with the idea that such an affair would necessarily prevent her riding and walking about with him, as she now did, for some months at least, and he was more than reconciled to the delay.

He now felt an unusual elevation of spirits, at Lord Desmond's making his house the first which

he had visited for anything beyond a regular ministerial dinner; and now he not merely came to Lady Eastham's ball, but was actually dancing with her himself!

Thus gratified and flattered, he followed into the ball-room, to see if the politician could thread the mazes of a waltz, as well as the tangled labyrinth of diplomacy.

Nothing could be more perfect than Lord Desmond's waltzing, though it possessed a shade of the generally dignified hauteur of his character; he moved as if it were a condescension to step from the elevated pedestal of power he occupied, and there was a gravity in his countenance which told that his thoughts were wandering to other subjects.

Little did any, but one heart there, imagine what those thoughts were; that no subject of public weal now engrossed them, but that they were reverting to scenes and feelings long gone by—to days of confiding love, and of unblighted hope—to the first sunny morning of youth, when unbroken in spirits, and fresh entering

into life, he pictured no laurels of fame on his path, but only the sweet roses of love scattered by one gentle hand.

And his partner, how did she bear herself, as hus again leaning on the arm of her first and nly love; did no woman's emotion kindle on er tell-tale cheek? No, Clara had not passed ie ordeal of three London seasons in vain; she id taught her brow too well to conceal the notions of her heart, now to fear detection; w, when the work, the hard and toilsome rk of years, might at once be overthrown by e weakness of a moment.

Once, and once only, did a shade of coniousness flit across her features as she passed ady St. Clair in the dance, who, perfectly wildered by seeing Clara with such an unpected partner, could not conceal the expression n her face, which was answered by Cecil ston's whispered explanation.

"Well may you look astonished, Lady St. lair; who would have thought of seeing the

philosophical political Lord Desmond submit his grave head to the whirl of a waltz? But he really dances superbly, and he and Lady Eastham are worth looking at, as the most splendid pair that can be imagined. Her charms must indeed be invincible, as even *he* is brought to worship at their shrine. It is singular that, thus secluding himself from all society, and apparently devoting his whole mind to public affairs, he should thus emerge, at once as it were, from his austerity, and not merely come to the gayest ball of the season, but himself mingle among the dancers."

"It is strange," replied Lady St. Clair; "but who can read the riddle of man's heart, or woman's either, sometimes; so I think we will cease to puzzle our brains with the cause, but be satisfied with the result, which decidedly gives a star of the first magnitude to the lustre of our parties; for now that Lord Desmond has once broken through the habit of seclusion, he must accept other invitations, and none will be backward in seeking such a *distingué* addition to

their rooms, for *distingué* he most surely is, in every acceptation of the term, not merely for his pre-eminence in public life, but for the singular beauty of his personal appearance. I have heard Lord St. Clair and others speak of him as handsome, but I was not prepared for anything so surpassingly perfect, both in face and figure. There is a sad shade of melancholy, and which some, perhaps, would call pride, on that noble brow, but to me it seems to tell of blighted hopes, and a sorrowing heart, amid all the fame that surrounds him."

"No one seems to know much of his private history, but the losing his Countess so early may account for the expression you noticed. Nothing could be more calculated to crush every blossom of joy than the loss of a young and beloved wife."

Lady St. Clair said nothing, but she knew in her own mind that no such cause as this preyed on the happiness of the statesman. She possessed the secret key to account for the insuffi-

ciency of power, and wealth, and fame, to bestow happiness; and, as she thought of this, she trembled for the effect it might produce on Clara's firm, but yet naturally sensitive mind.

Immediately that the waltz ended, Lord Desmond sought a seat in a situation as little exposed as might be to general observation, and, heedless of whither her steps were guided, Lady Eastham found herself in the very Turkish tent which in the first days of their marriage, her husband had desired might be fitted up at any cost to suit the taste of his lovely bride.

"Clara," said the deep, yet gentle voice of Lord Desmond, "now we have met, we must continue to do so. I am a lonely man in existence, with nothing to love but my little girl. Be to me a friend—be to her a protectress. I will never revert to the past—it shall be as a deadly blot in my life! But now—to have seen you again, and to sink back into the desert of the world once more alone,

is beyond my strength of endurance—is more than I have nerve for. Speak!—tell me that friendship may yet be ours!"

"You know not what you ask," replied Clara; "but be it so. One question only of the past, and then we will speak of it, we will think of it, no more. Explain this change of name—how do I now see you Lord Desmond?"

"You have probably forgotten that my mother was a Desmond, but so distantly related to the then Earl, that we had ourselves well nigh forgotten that the title and estates descended in the female line, failing any other. Several brothers died successively in childhood, and, in short, most unexpectedly the title has lately devolved on me. There is a fine old place in Ireland, but that is nothing to me now. I cannot live in retirement—the excitement of politics seems the only atmosphere in which I can exist. This is the first evening I have ever relaxed from close attention to business since I began my London career. When I took my

seat in the House of Lords, it was with the determination of dedicating my time, my talents—in short, my life to the service of my country; it was the only source of enjoyment open to me. I knew you were in London. Even among the circles of diplomacy I could not shut out the praises of your transcendent beauty. I constantly dreaded a meeting, and avoided every place of public resort as I would have done the plague. I refused every invitation to parties, where there was even a possibility of seeing you. I even evaded the commands of my Sovereign, and excused myself from attending either at the drawing-rooms or public entertainments at the Palace, where my appearance was graciously dispensed with, on the plea of my spirits not having yet recovered from the sudden death of Lady Desmond. Heaven forgive me, Clara, for this deception; but you at least know that no truer motive could be assigned for my studious and determined avoidance of all society. My solemn

promise of never crossing your path was always before my eyes; and God knows nothing could have made me break it, but what I conceived to be your own express wish. I never, for an instant, suspected that you did not know the Lord Desmond of to-day, was the ill-fated Fitzgerald of former years—ill-fated years. Yes, Clara, it seems a destiny which led me on to the infatuation of play, a vice I never indulged in before or since that fatal evening which wrecked my every hope of happiness; and it seems now the same destiny which gives you back to me as a friend, with that very jewel sparkling on your brow, to gain which for you, I so madly at last staked my all. You look astonished, and well you may. It does seem a singular coincidence, at least, that the ornament now bound amid your hair is the identical one I saw, and determined should be yours. It is too remarkable to be mistaken. That golden serpent, which twines round your raven tresses, with its rings gemmed with precious stones, and

eyes of the brightest diamonds, has just the effect I knew it must have, encircling your Grecian head. The price was beyond my means, but a strange fascination seemed to lurk in those sparkling eyes, and I was determined the bauble should be yours. For this childish folly, I ventured on the dangerous experiment of the gaming-table. You know the result; and now when I see you again, after years of misery and separation, you are restored to me with this fatal jewel glittering on your brow, and given by another hand than mine. Surely, surely, there is a wondrous fate in this, and I would augur that now we may meet as friends."

"This is a strange tale, indeed," said Clara, in agitated voice; "but no more. We must talk no more apart. I will introduce you to Lady St. Clair; we will be, as you say, a family of friends. I yield to the inscrutable decrees of fate; God grant we mistake not the interpretation of its decrees!"

An unusual happiness, "the light of other days," beamed on Clara's speaking countenance, as she introduced Lord Desmond to her aunt, and observed the kind, almost affectionate, manner with which she received him. Again the melodious tones of his well-remembered voice sounded on her ear, and she listened, as bound by a dangerous spell, to the accents still so dear, even when in general and indifferent conversation with others.

But to *her*, what could be indifferent that fell from his lips? and to *her*, there was still a look of deference and observance, which too fatally poke to her heart, that she reigned in his with ll the force of undivided supremacy. His onversation might be to others, but there was et a look, a nameless something, by her not) be mistaken, which told the tenor of his ıoughts.

He requested Lord and Lady St. Clair would ›in a party he had in contemplation to sail up

the river, and spend a long summer's day
his villa at Richmond.

"I shall beg you and Lady Eastham to
your own day, and give the invitations.
yet I have mingled in no general society; I
my old friend, Sir James Eastham, has m
me break through my hermit life to-night, a
I feel that once more exposed to the charm
female society, I cannot again forego it.
now, in mercy, ask me to your house as of
as you please—the spell which bound me
solitude is broken."

Lady St. Clair eagerly engaged Lord D
mond for her *soirée* on the morrow, and
early day was fixed in the following week
their expedition to Richmond. It was a pa
quite according to Sir James Eastham's c
heart; and he declared he had not forgot
his Eton skill in rowing, which then should
put to the test.

Lady Georgiana Macdonald, and her husb

d sister, were introduced, and included in the rty. Cecil Aston was already known to Lord smond, their political career often bringing em together; he, then, and Ernest Cavensh completed the party, which was to be all and friendly.

"At Richmond, at least, let us fly from a owd," was echoed by the favoured few among e invited.

CHAPTER VII.

"The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloo
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
And living as if earth contained no tomb,
And glowing into day."

CHILDE HAROLD, CANTO I

"At length the day departed, and the moon rose
another sun
On the banks of the majestic river."

ROGERS.

It was impossible for a finer day to

awnings; and another followed in the rear, containing a band of choice musicians, yet more to enliven the scene.

The party assembled in high spirits for a real day in the country, which, coming amidst the din and dust of London life, seems fresh as an oasis in the desert. Even Lord St. Clair cast away the cares of State, and seemed determined to be happy as the youngest, evidently pleased and flattered with the marked deference and consideration he met with from a statesman so much looked up to as Lord Desmond. Little did he dream the cause, or that being the uncle of Clara was the secret spring from whence arose all this respect and attention. Not that by this anything derogatory is intended to the character of this esteemed nobleman; on the contrary, he was always looked up to by all as a pattern of the ancient noblesse of our country, and there was an honour in his sentiments, and an upright integrity in his

actions, which shed a yet higher lustre on his station and rank in society.

But it was not these estimable qualities, although they were not overlooked, which softened the manners of Lord Desmond, even into affectionate respect when addressing Lord St. Clair; it was because he saw him hold almost a father's place in the love and reverence of his niece, whilst he reciprocated with the genuine kindliness of his nature.

The party had received one addition to those already mentioned in Lady Stavordale, who, when she heard of it, asked so earnestly for an introduction to Lord Desmond at Lady St. Clair's last *soirée*, that it was impossible to resist her wishes, even though Lady Eastham much doubted the august Duchess granting her daughter-in-law permission to join them, without herself and daughters being included, which Clara politely stated would make their numbers too large. However, for once, "her Grace of

Frowns," as Lady St. Clair sometimes laughingly called her, condescended to be propitious, and the young Marchioness gratefully accepted the courteous invitation which Lord Desmond gladly extended to any friend of Clara's.

There was besides a native gentleness, and *naïveté* of manner in Lady Stavordale, which, when removed from the supercilious observation of her husband and his family, spread an irresistible charm over her manners, which their arrogant hauteur cast completely into the shade when they were present. Her heart always seemed to warm towards Lady St. Clair and Clara; and she never appeared so happy as when she sometimes brought her darling boy with her in her carriage for an early call, and saw them kindly admire his extraordinary childish beauty.

Strange as it may appear, even this natural source of happiness was embittered to her at home by the constant interference of the Duchess in all her maternal plans, and the per-

fect indifference which his father seemed to show to this idol of her love, except as the destined receiver of the family honours of the Kingslands.

It cannot then be wondered at that this young creature gladly escaped from the iron rule of domestic tyranny, and listened with perhaps too pleased and confiding an ear to the insinuating flatteries and attentions of the acknowledged most captivating man of the day when he chose to make himself so; and that Ernest Cavendish did so choose, we have already seen in a former conversation between Clara and her aunt.

The party landed on the lawn of Lord Desmond's Richmond villa early in the day and luncheon was provided in a tent, erected for the purpose, in the midst of the beautiful grounds surrounding the house.

The trees were fine, and hung their waving branches over the Thames, towards which the grass sloped with velvet softness: the shrub

beries were intersected with winding walks and seats, ready for repose or conversation, and the space, though small in comparison with Eastham Court, or St. Clair Park, still was extensive enough for enjoyment, and to give all the charm of the country. Yet an air of melancholy seemed to reign around, and spoke of an habitation little cared for by its owner, to whom, in fact, it chiefly served as a nursery for his little girl, and giving her fresher breezes than could blow round his town residence.

Not that her rosy cheeks appeared to need any amendment, and as she was now bidden to welcome her guests, and the nurse brought her out, decked in a new blue sash and shoes, with her dark glossy curls tied back with ribbons of the same colour, she immediately exclaimed, as running up to Clara:

"See, nurse, the pretty lady who talked to us in the Park; but I do not see the great dog, oh! I wish so you had brought the great dog with you."

"And so do I," said the good-natured Lord St. Clair; "but ask your papa to let you come and see us in Grosvenor Square, and you shall play with Banquo as long as you like."

"Oh! I should like that very much; may I go, papa? and I hope you will be there, too," said the happy child, looking up into Clara's face.

It was the very winning look which her father had worn in happier hours—few could trace it now on his careworn brow—and Clara at once saw the indescribable charm which had attracted her to this lovely child in her morning walks in the Park. The likeness was then undefined, but it had spoken at once to her heart.

Lord Desmond fondly took his little girl in his arms, and, as he stooped his manly head among her dark curls, an unusual emotion yet lingered in his eye as he raised it, saying:

"Yes, my love, you may surely go; it will be my dearest wish that these ladies should be your friends."

Clara took the tiny hand, and, pressing it to her lips, spoke more in that expressive action to the heart of the father, than thousands of words could have done.

"And will you love me?" lisped the gentle voice of the child; "I have nobody but papa to love me, and dear, kind nurse, I must not forget her. But I should like you to love me, too; and that pretty blue-eyed lady," looking at Lady St. Clair. "And Banquo, I remember his name quite well, he must love me, too—won't it be very nice, papa? But tell me," said the yet chattering little girl, turning again to Lady Eastham; "tell me what your name is, will you? I like to know people's names."

"Lady Eastham," replied her father.

"No, I do not mean that name, papa, I mean the name, the same as mine is Mary."

"Oh! you mean what is called my christian name," kindly explained Lady Eastham, "mine is Clara."

"Oh, what a pretty name!" said the delighted

child; "and I am sure it is a favourite name of papa's, for often when I am playing quietly in his room, and he is busy reading and writing, I hear him say, 'Clara, Clara,' but I suppose he was reading some story about her, and did not know it was a real name, like mine."

The heightened colour on Lord Desmond's cheek, confirmed the secret his little girl had revealed, but it passed unobserved by any but Lady St. Clair and Clara, who adroitly turned the conversation into a less dangerous channel.

The day passed away in friendly and cheerful converse: it seemed a *réunion* of friends, whose tastes and minds harmonized with the lovely scene around. Sometimes the subjects were rather foreign to Sir James's pursuits, but with perfect good-nature he could let others enjoy them; and finding some bows and arrows, and setting up a neglected target, there was no lack of amusement even to him; and he drew Ernest Cavendish on to giving Lady Stavordale some lessons in archery, who was nothing loath to

become his pupil, little deeming that it was his aim to shoot a far more dangerous arrow into her unsuspecting heart.

They returned under the splendour of a summer's moon, and, as the full notes of the horns were borne on the night breeze, from the boat behind them, nothing but hearts attuned to the scene was wanting to complete its charm.

Perhaps Lady Georgiana and her husband were the only ones who thoroughly enjoyed it: there was no rankling thorn in their own hearts to dispel, or jar upon the calm serenity of the scene. In the full possession of married felicity, they asked no further joy. United in the holiest of bonds, they felt the happiest of their kind,

"Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend.
'Tis not the coarser tie of human laws,
Unnatural oft, and foreign to the mind,
That binds their peace, but harmony itself
Alluring all their passions into love.

Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will
With boundless confidence, for nought but love
Can answer love, and render bliss secure.

Ernest Cavendish had secured a seat next to Lady Stavordale, and there was a softness, a tenderness in the hour, mixed with the balmy air, which, breathing over the various gardens of the villas that lined the banks of the river, came to them, "radiant with sweets," and cast a seducing charm over the insidious whisperings of his impassioned voice, as he poured into her ear words which could reach none other, and too powerfully found an echo in her heart.

Clara and Lord Desmond sate apart: each seemed to dread a contact with the other, and feared to indulge in the enervating fascination, which the clear, calm moonlight spread around. Unused to the dangerous proximation of each other's society, each avoided by a too speaking silence the betrayal of thoughts and remembrances, which the scene and the hour were only too calculated to inspire.

Lady St. Clair, fathoming the cause of their protracted silence, broke the dangerous charm, by calling forth the full tones of her finely-modulated voice, in a lively Italian song, bidding Clara join in chorus.

This had all the effect she desired—the spell of feeling was broken—each was able to see the necessity for mental exertion, and the chain of lively discourse was never allowed to drop again until they landed at Whitehall Stairs, and found their carriages in waiting. If Clara's hand trembled as Lord Desmond handed her in, it was so slightly that even he might have passed it unnoticed, and in a cheerful mood the whole party drove to Grosvenor Square, where the evening closed with a friendly old-fashioned supper at Lord St. Clair's.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Return we to the hero of our tale—the youth
Has grown to manhood, and the flash of joy
From off his brow has pass'd away,
And left the stamp of sorrow, e'en in the summer
Of his years, when ev'ry pulse should beat with gladness."

It is necessary, for the elucidation of our story, to retrace the path of time, and when Clara Cameron first sought the protection of her uncle, to see how William Fitzgerald, after his final letter to the beloved of his young heart, was hurried on by dire necessity into a marriage with one to whom he was at least indifferent.

All we have yet heard of him was as that etter described him, hastening on the preparaions of an union, which to him was fraught vith bitterness and despair.

When Mr. Jenkinson saved him and his arents from the utter ruin his infatuated folly t the gaming-table had involved them in, it vas, as his letter to Clara had told, with the xpectation of raising his only and beloved hild to that rank in society for which he had o long, and hitherto so fruitlessly, toiled. For im, there was no fastidious demur as to whether he husband he had selected would be acceptable to his daughter, or whether he could ffer her more than his hand. Love and affecion, with every finer feeling of our nature, found o place in a heart which, from earliest boyood had, as drudge in a country shop, been levoted to gain.

We have seen how well these toils had been repaid, and, at the time of which we write, the City of London contained no richer trades-

man than Oliver Jenkinson. He possessed a sumptuous house at Highgate, fitted up with all the luxury wealth could purchase, devoid of taste. It was there his daughter was residing, and there William Fitzgerald was promised the first interview with his intended bride, the morning following the strange adventure in St. James's Street.

The citizen took care to arrive at his country house in time for the usual hour of breakfast, and unusual smiles were on his lean, spare visage as his daughter entered the room, and took her seat at the table.

"You did not come home last night, as I expected, papa," said a soft and gentle voice. "I hope nothing disagreeable detained you?"

"No, indeed, nothing disagreeable; quite the contrary. At last, my dear child, I have it in my power to place you in that situation and rank of life, which your own beauty and accomplishments so well deserve — to say nothing of the princely fortune I can give you."

The delicate, fair cheek of Louisa Jenkinson was suffused with blushes at these words, though as yet she understood not all their import. Brought up in one of the most fashionable schools, with everything that money could bestow lavished on her accomplishments and dress, the young heiress could not yet escape without frequent mortifications from the more aristocratic of her associates. Her birth was constantly looked down upon, and, while the Lady Julias, or the Honourable Miss Olivias, talked over the gay parties which had been given by their parents at their several homes during the holidays, or sometimes even of a juvenile ball given by royalty at which they had themselves been present, poor little Louisa Jenkinson could not but feel the insufficiency of all her money to raise her to an equality with the nobly-born of the land.

Naturally timid and retiring in disposition, her talents even could not find their level in this hot-bed for fostering youthful vanity. She

had no tales of greatness to relate in her turn; and, when the anticipations of her companions led them to dwell on the time when they should themselves be presented at Court, and partake of the gay and elegant exclusiveness of Almack's, she seemed to "hide her diminished head," and to think with mortification, that, instead of the ermine of the nobleman, her father was, or rather had been, decked with the apron of the shopkeeper.

She had sufficient tact to discover that none of her present associates would condescend to visit a tradesman's villa at Highgate, however sumptuous might be the entertainments, or expensive the establishment. She, therefore, formed no friendships, which, sometimes begun at school, continue to shed a cheering and lasting influence over the whole future life. None of these hallowed ties endeared to Louisa Jenkinson the remembrance of her school-days at Kensington; and she left the select establishment of twenty young ladies, superintended

by Madame Blancheville, with little feeling of regret, or hope of a happier life in the home which awaited her in her father's house.

Had her mind been of a stronger tone, she could have better wrestled with the difficulties and decided *desagrémens* of her situation, and sought in the resources of her own intellectual pursuits some counter-action to the dull monotony of the stately grandeur which her father insisted upon inflicting upon her. Placing her in one of the most expensive and fashionable schools he could find, he fondly flattered himself his daughter would catch gentility, as she might the measles, or hooping-cough. But though he so far succeeded as to give her a decided taste for a better tone of society than what he could himself offer for her participation in, he could not unfortunately, with the taste, also give her the corresponding means of enjoying it.

When she returned home, she necessarily sank far out of sight of her former companions,

and though he at first desired her to send pressing invitations to her titled school-fellows, she never received anything but a cold and almost supercilious negative, and at length, tired out with his useless attempts in this way to attain any footing in better society, he determined, in a fit of despair, to make the desperate adventure we have seen, to secure to her a more aristocratic name than his own.

Thus pleased with the result of his experiment, he was gazing on the face of his fair child, and hoping that in time his wealth might even enable her husband to place a coronet round her brow, at least a baronetcy might surely be purchased; when a note was placed in his hand, which, eagerly opening, he devoured the contents with evident delight, and pushed it towards Miss Jenkinson, saying:

"There, Louisa, my dear, read that—you see everybody does not disdain to come to us, and I assure you, Mr. Fitzgerald is a true scion of the old Milesian aristocracy."

The letter ran thus—

"Dear Sir,

"You fixed in our meeting last night, that I ould have the pleasure of dining with you at ighgate, at seven o'clock to-day; but pardon y impatience to be introduced to Miss enkinson, and allow me to hasten the hour for ur interview, by joining your luncheon at one 'clock. I beg to remain, dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"WILLIAM AUGUSTUS FITZGERALD.

'Mivart's Hotel, Wednesday Morning."

"Well, dear papa," said the young lady, after ily reading the letter pushed to her across the reakfast-table; "who is this Mr. Fitzgerald? nd how have you become acquainted? I never eard you mention the name before."

"How I became acquainted with this gentleman, it is no use to tell you, Louisa," replied the ather; "and who he is, I have already told you. f you had asked *why* he was so anxious to be

introduced to you, would be more to the purpose, I think. But you, young ladies, think it pretty and becoming to mince matters, I suppose. But mind me, girl; I have indulged all your whimseys as much as lay in my power; and now I expect you to yield to mine, which is no hard command either: and that is, to accept a very handsome young gentleman for your husband, and become in right of him a lady, that none of your beggarly, proud aristocracy need look down upon. I tell you, girl, I have money enough to buy them all."

"Indeed, papa, I do not understand what you mean. I have never even seen Mr. Fitzgerald; how then can he wish to become my husband?"

Oliver Jenkinson's ideas of bartering for a bale of sugar, or a hogshead of tallow, were much the same as his negotiating for his daughter's hand: each was to be bought for money, or in this case for money's worth.

Vexed for the moment that the advantage

he had gained was not as eagerly grasped by the really astounded girl as by himself, he replied with an asperity unusual to him, for he was in general a kind father:

"Let me have no nonsense on this subject, Louisa. I tell you at once, Mr. Fitzgerald is to be your husband; and when you see him, you will think yourself very lucky to have got so handsome a young fellow, with as good a name as any in Ireland. There is much more fear of his not being satisfied with your pale face, if you look as frightened as you do now. Go up stairs, and consult your new French maid as to the most becoming dress for this morning, as well as for dinner. I will ring the bell, and give orders for the best room to be prepared for Mr. Fitzgerald, who I asked to stay all night, and desire that luncheon and dinner may be served up in the best possible style. I will show the young man he is coming at least into no poverty-stricken house."

CHAPTER IX.

"Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
Was ever woman in this humour won?"

RICHARD THE THIRD.

LOUISA JENKINSON was really a pretty girl, with a profusion of fair hair hanging in ringlets over a face which was only rather too much like a wax-doll. Her eyes were blue, but they wanted expression, and the general contour of her figure was good, though perhaps too *petite*; but now tastefully dressed by a Parisian maid, she might have passed for a ladylike-looking girl, if a fastidious observer did not look too minutely

the hands and feet, those sure betrayers of
:beian descent.

She was this morning looking particularly
ll, for the nervous situation in which she felt
rself placed by her peremptory father, with
further explanation of the views of her in-
ıded visitor than has already transpired, had
ven a deeper glow than usual to her cheek,
d consequently imparted more of expression
d intellect to her eye.

A quick knock at the door, as the clock
ıck one, took her to the glass to see if her
rls were yet in the nicest possible order, and
e French collar, of the newest fashion, without
crease round her pretty white throat. She
stily drew on a pair of delicate kid gloves to
le any deficiency in the beauty of the hands,
d, carefully adjusting her drapery, so that only
e top of an exquisite satin shoe was visible,
e thought to herself, surely she might defy
e criticism of the most fastidious observer.

But all this care was thrown away upon the

nonchalant young man, who now entered the room, attended by her father.

William Fitzgerald, like a man taking the last plunge for his life, was determined to carry it through with the most reckless and hardy indifference; but he dared not trust himself with his own thoughts, and the interim between the hour of waking from his feverish and disturbed slumbers, seemed only possible to be passed by positive action. This induced his hurrying on the final interview with his intended father-in-law and his daughter; and it was anything but lover-like impatience which hurried him into the presence of his mistress.

He drove up as it were mechanically to the highly-ornamented villa, called Clareville Lodge, and passed unheeding through a long train of powdered lacqueys, which their master had expressly ordered should be in attendance in their dress-liveries to receive him. The old man himself bustled to meet him in the hall,

and a look of perfect satisfaction pervaded his countenance, as he shook his son-in-law, or rather his victim, by the hand, and led the way up stairs into the best drawing-room, where he had commanded his daughter to await her guest.

She arose with little visible tremor from the sofa, on which she was seated, apparently engaged with one of the novels of the day, and gave that graceful *accueil* to her visitor, which Madame Blancheville was particularly solicitous to impart to her pupils. The curtsey was according to the last rules of a French dancing-master, and the smile was neither too slight nor too marked to infringe the laws of a Lord Chesterfield.

William Fitzgerald bowed low to hide a greater agitation in his own manner than was betrayed by the fair little being before him. Perhaps he was somewhat relieved by her exterior, though there was nothing in her insipid face to remind him of the soul-beaming eye of

the woman he resigned; yet there was altogether a more ladylike exterior than he expected to find in a daughter of Oliver Jenkinson's.

His own feelings were too completely those of a gentleman, by birth and education, to fail in any necessary courtesy to a woman. He knew the misery of his situation was of his own inflicting, not hers; and God forbid he should wound her feelings, if he could avoid it. The cold observance of his manners was sufficient to satisfy a young and inexperienced girl, who, perhaps, thought that very coldness was a part of the polish of high society.

The father continued talking on general subjects, not failing to draw the attention of his guest to the splendid harp and grand piano which ornamented the room, and which he assured him his daughter played on beautifully, "at least ought to do, for her instruction had cost him a power of money," till the butler summoned them to luncheon, where a table was prepared with every delicacy, and the most

expensive wines and fruits which could be offered at that hour of the day.

When their refreshment was concluded, Mr. Jenkinson proposed that his daughter should show Mr. Fitzgerald the gardens and hot-houses, that, as he expressed himself, "the young people might get acquainted," adding, in an under-tone to the now embarrassed Louisa, as she left the room to seek her bonnet:

"I shall explain when you are gone that I have informed you of the purport of this visit, and as it is of no use shilly-shallying when the thing is fixed, he may decide upon as early a time as he pleases for the ceremony taking place—so mind—no difficulties on your part."

The young lady returned in a bonnet and feathers, better fitted for a drive in the park than a stroll in their own gardens; nevertheless, hers was a style of dollish beauty which required the advantages of dress, and, if she did not herself display much taste in selection, her maid and milliner took care she should

possess nothing but what was really well made, and of the most costly and expensive materials.

Her affianced husband politely offered her his arm on leaving the apartment, and as she saw her French maid peeping at them through the blinds of her room, which looked upon the garden, she could not help a girlish vanity at the very strikingly handsome person with whom she was walking. Nothing could be more un-loverlike than the conversation which was kept up between the young pair, which flowed on with tolerable fluency on the last new opera, the play, and some lighter works of fiction, the scene of one of which being laid in Italy, induced Louisa to remark, "it must be delightful to visit those beautiful scenes," which led to a rejoinder on the part of her *affiancé*, "that he was charmed to hear her say so, as he was desirous of travelling, if not ultimately settling abroad, so soon as their marriage took place." This gave rise to a very becoming blush on the cheek of the young lady, but it

ther cooled as he calmly proceeded: "But I ll not trouble you, Miss Jenkinson, with any rangements on this subject; your father will ve you all trouble, and has kindly undertaken be my mediator with you for as early a day possible, or we shall lose the best time of the r for our voyage, which I propose being at e to Italy, and particularly as you desire it," attempted to add with some show of gal-try, as he bowed on relinquishing her hand they re-entered the house.

"Well, my dear, I hope you have had a asant walk," chuckled the old man, as they ne into the drawing-room. "I dare say Mr. zgerald has made himself a very agreeable npanion, eh?—much better than I should ve been, eh? But it is all very natural—hers must be content to be put on the shelf en husbands come in the way—eh, Mr. zgerald? But you must let me come to ne of your fine parties when you have taken ouse in town—eh, Loo? I reckon some of

your fine schoolfellows will be glad to be your visitors then, though they would not come to a humdrum citizen like me; but, as I have often told you, I could buy them all up, so never look down about it, child. You may look down upon them yet, I can tell you—eh, Mr. Fitzgerald, don't you think so?"

Really desirous to save the embarrassment which her father's coarse vulgarity could not but inspire in the more refined and cultivated mind of his daughter, Mr. Fitzgerald, stopped the current of his ideas by briefly remarking, "that they should not be in London at present, as Miss Jenkinson had expressed a desire to travel abroad, and he should of course follow her wish by going immediately to Rome, where they might probably make some pleasant acquaintances, and the length of their stay, either there or at Naples, might be guided entirely by circumstances."

"Oh! that's it, is it, eh? why Loo, did not know you wanted to see foreign

countries; I thought England was good enough for you, where all your father's money has been made. But, however, do as you like, do as you like; I am glad to see that you and Mr. Fitzgerald have agreed so well, and that he is so willing to please you as to go across the sea to gratify your fancies. I suppose you think it is no use learning French, and Italian, and German, without going where you may show off a bit, and talk them. For my part, I have found English quite enough for me, and one tongue is sometimes more than enough for a woman. But I don't mean to twit you with that, my dear, for I must say you are a quiet good little girl, who has no love for contradiction, and that will be a good thing for you, Mr. Fitzgerald, won't it now, eh?"

His more considerate guest evaded any reply, by asking the hour of dinner, and requesting to be shown his room to dress. To this the bustling host volunteered to lead the way himself, saying he had only a few city friends coming,

and the clergyman of the parish with his wife and daughter. As they proceeded into the sumptuous apartment prepared for Mr. Fitzgerald, the old citizen could not refrain from drawing his attention to the richness of the furniture, which he declared had been ordered by the Duke of ——, for his place in the country, but the upholsterer, finding he had never any chance of being paid for it, preferred a safer, though less dignified, purchaser, in the proprietor of Clareville Lodge.

"I am glad to see, my young friend, that you and my little girl get on so well together. To be sure she may be rather shy or so, but you won't find her the worse for that, and I am much mistaken if she does not make her way among the great folks you will introduce her to as well as any of them. I was thinking, my good Sir, could you not introduce her at Court before you go abroad? It would be a great thing for her there, to say she had seen the Queen of England."

Mr. Fitzgerald promised to see if there would e an opportunity for doing this before they iled, and contrived to get rid of his officious nd troublesome, was-to-be, father-in-law, by nging for the attendance of his own valet.

"What, you young men can't dress your-lves now-a-days, eh? well, well, I like things be in proper order and style, though I can't ar to have any one fidgetting about me. But uisa has a smart little lass waiting on her, d so it's only fair you should have an atten-nt, too, I suppose; and I am glad you have ought him down here, for it looks more nteel and grand like, and if you have not w, you soon will have plenty of money, I n tell you that. And it's no use, I'm think-g, to tell other folk you had not a brass thing to bless yourself with last night; but ver mind, never mind, I'll keep your secret ug and tight, depend upon it."

When William Fitzgerald returned to the awing-room, he found the guests consisted of

a Mr. and Mrs. Buggins, just married, Mr. Alderman White and his son and daughter—Mr. and Mrs. Dobbs, just retired from a tallow-chandler's shop in Cheapside, with half a million of money, and the clergyman of Highgate, Mr. Stanhope, with his wife and daughter, who were the only guests at all congenial to Mr. Fitzgerald's previous habits of life, if we omit Miss Jenkinson, whose education, and hitherto short residence under her father's roof, rendered her far superior both to himself and friends in external manners, and internal delicacy and propriety of feeling.

Mr. and Mrs. Buggins had been spending the honeymoon at Margate, and expatiated on the delightful seclusion they had enjoyed in a cottage "quite rural," covered with roses and honeysuckles, and with a little arbour at one end of the garden, where they had an excellent view of all the smart people walking about, when they did not like to join them "For you know," simpered the tall, gawk

bride, who sedulously sported her wedding-dress of white satin and orange flowers, "you know, Miss Jenkinson, it is so painful to the delicate feelings of a young married lady to be always stared at as a bride, that I found it quite unpleasant going often into the public walks."

"My dear love," said Mr. Buggins, "I am sure I would not have your sensitive nature wounded for the world; but I cannot help thinking that if you had taken the orange flowers from out your white bonnet, and condescended to wear coloured gloves, and let me do the same, we might have passed for an old married couple very well, and no one would have taken the trouble to look after us."

"Oh, la! my sweet Tom, how can you talk so?" replied the interesting bride. "How was it possible for me to seem other than I really was; that I had just given up all for you, and was no longer Miss Amelia Augusta Higgins, but had assumed the dear name of Mrs.

Buggins? How could I, my dear darling, forget all this, or bear to wear any other bonnet, or gloves, than those in which I had become your own?"

"Well, my dear angel, I will say no more about it; we passed our time very pleasantly, what with one thing and what with another. To watch the steam-boats come in was a great amusement, and we could see all that by standing only just outside our own gate."

"Oh, yes, my own Tom, that is a sweet remembrance. Never shall I forget the happy hours we have spent at that rural wicket-gate, or in that romantic summer-house, all covered with ivy and such like odoriferous creepers—to be sure the seat was dirty at first, and soiled my new lavender silk dress; but so considerate, like yourself, my dear, you know you always spread your pocket-handkerchief for me to sit on afterwards."

Mr. Jenkinson, being rather wearied by the billing and cooing of these turtle-doves, and

anxious to inform the company that the gentlemanly young stranger was soon to be his son-in-law, attempted the "letting the cat out of the bag," as he would call it, in the most adroit and "natural-like" manner.

"I suppose, Mrs. Buggins, you think to set these young ladies longing to be married, as you are so fond of talking of your honeymoon, as folks call it; for my part, I never eat more honey then than at other times, as I know of. I always think a nice fresh honeycomb is a pleasant relish in a morning, especially when the bread gets a thought too stale. My poor Mrs. Jenkinson, Mrs. J—— as I always called her for short, used to be very particular in not allowing new bread, as wasteful and extravagant. Ah, poor soul! she might have hot rolls every morning now and the best Epping butter;—but I am shoving off like from what I was agoing to say, that you, Mrs. Buggins, would be making all the young ladies agog to be married; and the speaking so well of

the holy state of matrimony comes just *a-propos*, as we may say, to my little Louisa, there—does it not, my dear, eh?"

All eyes were now directed to the blushing girl; but the unmerciful father, chuckling at his own conceit answering so well, continued:

"Nay, nay, never colour up, child; there's nothing to be ashamed of, that I see, in marrying such a chap as this young un' here. I shall be proud, that I shall, Mr. Fitzgerald, to introduce you as my son-in-law," suiting the action to the words with a hearty slap on the back.

Excessively annoyed and ashamed at the observation, and congratulations which this characteristic speech brought on himself and Louisa, Mr. Fitzgerald was never more relieved than when dinner was announced by the portly butler, who looked ten times more like a gentleman than his master, and he offered his arm to the confused girl by his side.

Mrs. Buggins rose in haste, lest her privilege

of bride, in preceding the rest of the company, should be overlooked, and determined that for once Mrs. Stanhope should not be led out first, though she was a baronet's daughter, a circumstance which had long been gall and wormwood to the wealthy Mrs. Dobbs, who, possessing as many thousands as she did hundreds, thought it a very unjust thing, constantly to be placed in the background, but which she always took care to emerge from as speedily as possible, and to make *her* carriages, *her* horses, *her* graperies and pineries, &c., bear a prominent part in conversation, and thus mortify the proud, though poor, parson's wife.

If it were possible for her vulgar and purse-proud mind for a moment to penetrate into that of a real gentlewoman, she would have seen with vexation how completely her attempts to mortify fell innoxious, and even completely unobserved by Mrs. Stanhope. Bred up in the old ancestral halls of an English country house, she yet thought it no degradation to seek a

more humble home, when shared by one, her equal in birth, alike born and educated a gentleman.

Very sure are we, that if there were more such clergymen as Mr. Stanhope, the Church need fear neither downfall nor diminution of respect. Retaining his station of gentleman in the world, he was looked up to by his parishioners with respect, and keeping the even tenour of his way, was unshaken by the various winds of doctrine, which are calculated to lower and weaken the venerable establishment of our Church.

When the important business of being seated at table in due observance to the laws of precedence, of which, be it known, those who have the least title to any are the most tenacious, Mr. Jenkinson looked round with satisfied pride on the sumptuous entertainment spread before him, and the prodigious display of gold and silver plate.

Looking at Mr. Fitzgerald, who retained his

eat by his daughter, and nodding with a know-
ng wink:

"You have not things in better style than
his, I reckon, at any Lord's at the West-end,
h? I never ask my friends to dine with me
o starve them, eh?"

"Let me give you some of this venison,
Mr. Alderman White, I assure you it's prime;
nd so it ought to be," whispering an audible
side to Mrs. Buggins; "what do you think I
ave for it?"

"Really, Mr. Jenkinson, I cannot say," sim-
ered the interesting bride, "I am but a young
ousekeeper as yet, you know, and but little
ccustomed to the price of meat. Indeed,
ly dear Mr. B—— is so kind, he wishes me
o take no trouble of this sort myself, but to
ave everything to the servants."

"That won't do, Mrs. Buggins, depend upon
; 'A fool and his money are soon parted,' eh!
ou know the old proverb? eh! But excuse

my bluntness, I mean no offence, Ma'am. But I should never have got this haunch of venison if I had left it to other people, I can tell you. But it's a capital story; I'll give the whole history. I was a rummaging about to find some venison, it being very scarce just now; and as I went into a great poulterer's shop, who always has prime game of all sorts, what did I spy but this venison. 'So,' says I, 'What's the price of that there haunch?' 'It is sold, Sir,' replied the man, 'it is going off directly to Lord Biggleswade's.' 'I didn't ask if it was sold, did I?' says I, 'I asked the price of it.' 'Half-a-crown a pound,' replied the butcher. 'Half-a-crown a pound is it,' says I, 'and you won't see your money yet awhile from Lord Biggleswade, I can tell you that. So I will give you four shillings a pound, paid down;' and I suited the action to the words, and took out a well-filled purse. Didn't I get it then? I fancy I did in a jiffy. So I wraps it up in my

pocket-handkerchief, and calling a cab, took it off at once. Now is not that a good un?"

"Miss Jenkinson," said Mr. Alderman White, "will you do me the honour to take wine? You young ladies always prefer light French wines, I think; I dare say there is Bucephalus on the table, if you choose it."

"No, Mr. Alderman, there is none of that there sort, my butler says it is quite second-rate, and gone out of fashion; but you will find hock and champagne; and there's some *cotty rotty*, much bragged of just at present; perhaps you will try that."

"Much obliged, Sir; no, I'll even keep to what I know. I am not fond of these new-fashioned names. Will champagne, Miss Louisa, be agreeable to you?"

The really excellent dinner, dressed by a first-rate French cook, would have gone off extremely well, if the officious host would only have been satisfied to let the well-trained servants hand it

round in proper rotation; but this did not seem at all to satisfy his notions of hospitality, and all attempts at conversation were constantly stopped with:

"Mr. Fitzgerald, I hope you take care of the ladies next you." "Louisa, my dear, I don't think Mr. Dobbs has made half a dinner." "Miss Stanhope, you young ladies live on nothing; but perhaps you are waiting for the sweet things. I havn't lost my sweet tooth myself yet, and like those sort of kickshaws, only I can never make out their names now-a-days. There is a new-fangled sort of pudding, baked in a paper, all froth like, which comes in well at the end of all, for it takes up no room, called a *suffly*. I dare say there will be one to-day. Miss White, you have no currant-jelly to your venison; I am quite ashamed to see you eating it without."

Wearied and disgusted with the dinner-scene, Mr. Fitzgerald was fain to leave the gentlemen

early, and retire to the drawing-room, which called forth some broad jokes on his haste to join his bride elect.

Mrs. and Miss Stanhope gave them some really good music, in which Louisa took a part, and performed very creditably on both the harp and piano. Her voice, too, was pleasing, and she had been well taught, though there was no natural taste to breathe anything of feeling into her singing, which formed as striking a contrast as could well be conceived to the soul-felt harmony over which William Fitzgerald had hung enraptured during his brief, but blissful, sojourn in Scotland.

There was nothing here to remind him of the past,-and it was well for him it was so, or his manners might have appeared yet more abstracted than they were.

"Really, Miss Jenkinson," said the Alderman's daughter, as they went into Louisa's dressing-room, "I cannot congratulate you on a very entertaining lover; to be sure he is very

attentive to you, and all that, but I should like a little more fun. Now, my Mr. Brown makes me die with laughing all day long: he makes such a many droll jokes about turning White into Brown. I wish he had been here to-day."

"You know I have never such high spirits as you have," quietly replied Louisa; "besides, it appears to me more gentlemanly to be rather grave. I think Mr. Fitzgerald will suit me much better than if he were more noisy."

"Well, that's all taste," added the vivacious young lady. "For my part, I like a bit of fun; but I must confess certainly Mr. Fitzgerald is uncommon genteel, and certainly handsomer than my Mr. Brown, though I have not the dislike to red hair which some people have."

After this specimen of a citizen's dinner at Highgate, Mr. Fitzgerald spent as little time as was consistent with common decorum with his affianced bride; he excused himself by the desire to hasten, by his personal superintendence, all the voluminous law-preparations for their mar-

riage: besides which, there were carriages to select, servants to hire, and many other things which he pleaded, necessarily made his Highgate visits few and short.

Fortunately, Louisa Jenkinson was easily satisfied, and her father was too much gratified with all the grand preparations going forward, ever to have time to perceive any faults in his intended son-in-law.

CHAPTER X.

"I saw him stand
Before an altar—with a gentle bride;
Her face was fair, but was not that which made
The starlight of his boyhood?"

BYRON.

If Clara's wedding-day had been one of fearful exertion to her mental courage and powers of calm endurance amidst conflicting feelings, how much more acute must have been the agony of William Fitzgerald as he found the moment arrive when he must lead another than the ever fondly-cherished idol of his youthful heart, to the altar of his God, and

there vow an affection he had it not in his power to bestow?

He might well have said to the tranquil being by his side:

> "Smile on, nor venture to unmask
> Man's heart, and view the hell that's there."

The only alleviating drop in the cup of bitterness which he must drain, even to the dregs, was the consoling thought that, though the mad destroyer of his own happiness, he should not necessarily involve that of the unsuspecting young creature who was so soon to become his own.

Fortunately for her, nature had neither endowed Louisa Jenkinson with sensitive feelings, nor an ardent temperament. All within was as cold and unimpassioned as the clear blue of her eye, and the quiet placidity of her countenance. She had never been otherwise than satisfied with the scrupulous attention which the gentlemanly feelings and naturally generous heart of

her betrothed husband always made a point of paying her. If with these no tender observances of love ever mingled, it was a want unfelt by her.

Perfectly pleased with her future prospects, the only annoyance she had met with, was that the haste with which their nuptials were hurried on, prevented as extensive a trousseau as she had wished; but wealth can do much in hurrying milliners and jewellers, and when the arrangements were completed, a duchess need not have been ashamed of their variety and splendour; and besides, the impatience of delay in the bridegroom, might well be considered as flattering to the fair young bride.

The ambition of Oliver Jenkinson was fully gratified when he saw the elegant new travelling-carriage in which Mr. Fitzgerald drove up to Clareville Villa on the morning of the wedding, and minutely examined the united arms of Jenkinson and Fitzgerald emblazoned on its panels.

Every one knows that a handsome fee at the lerald's College will ensure a suitable shield r every name; and Mr. Jenkinson had been ell pleased with the selection of three foxes' eads, separated by a fret of azure, and the rest a fox rampant, with the appropriate notto, "La sagesse gagne beaucoup." And hough perhaps "cunning" would have exressed both the wiliness of the animal and the ccess in life of the man, yet "wisdom" was a uch better sounding word, and altogether oked more imposing.

Those new-fangled arms were, therefore, paled with all the pretention of an heiress on ancient shield of the Fitzgeralds, quartered th the yet nobler bearings of the Desmonds. ch are the strange incongruities which so en meet in human life!

The bride was attended by the clergyman's ghter, Miss Stanhope, as bridesmaid, on om the ostentatious Oliver had bestowed a ss far more expensive than the finances of a

country parson could have afforded, that she might seem, as he said, more on an equality with his daughter, totally overlooking that there is an aristocracy of birth far superior to that of wealth; and in which Mr. Stanhope was as much above him, as he was inferior in a well-filled purse.

He was also pleased with his daughter's selection of bridesmaid, as the patrician name of Stanhope would have a far better appearance in a flaming paragraph in the newspapers, than than those of Buggins, Dobbs, &c., &c.

All the final arrangements completed, the young bride was ready dressed in the drawing-room when the bridegroom's step was heard on the stairs, hasty and impetuous, but no corresponding ardour burned beneath, and this seemed to him only the closing act of a fearful tragedy; but at least it should be well played. None of his own bitter grief should betray itself; and, though he might inwardly curse the very hour he was born, those curses should not extend,

if at least the gentlest observance could evade them, on the head of the young wife he was going to take to love and to cherish, to watch over, and protect, till death should them part: the first clause of this tender engagement he knew was beyond his power to fulfil. The only one he could ever love was separated by a fearful gulf, over which it was impossible even now to gaze without a crime; but to guard and to protect—yes, this he was at least able to perform, and this, said the better feelings of his nature, he would perform, as he rushed impetuously into the room, and bowed low on the hand of his betrothed.

The action might be too cold for the occasion, but all he did was too graceful ever to seem amiss in the eyes of Louisa, who, if she did not love him very enthusiastically, at least did so with all the capabilities of her unimpassioned nature, and now looked with gratified pride on the man so soon to become her husband.

His was indeed a figure and a face well calculated to please the most fastidious of female critics; and Louisa having never seen him when the expression was beaming with joy and happiness, knew not the sad alteration which a fixed despair had made there. It was no fitful grief of an April day, which, in clouds one moment, may shine out again in brightness the next, but the settled gloom of a November sky.

Yet no ill temper was mingled with this now-habitual gravity of expression — temper exhibits itself on the surface, and sinks not into every pervading fibre of the heart. This was not the case with William Fitzgerald: his naturally fine temper remained unobscured, but the lightness of his heart, the buoyancy of his spirits were fled, and he entered upon life as a troublous and uninteresting scene, with much to disquiet and little to delight.

Still, the resources of art, and genius, and literature were yet open to him, and the time might come when he could once again turn

to them, and in the land of poetry, and song, and painting, whither his steps were turning, these refined relaxations of the mind might afford amusement, and relieve, at least, the *ennui* of a heartless existence; but *now* he had only to endure the destiny he had brought upon himself.

"Here you are, son-in-law, are you, eh?" exclaimed Mr. Jenkinson, as he broke upon the lover's *tête-à-tête*. "All in good time, eh? but that's quite right. By jingo, a man may be a little impatient on his wedding morning—don't you think so, Louey, my dear? I have been down into the stableyard looking at the arms on the carriage. I see the man has done them quite right; and those three foxes of mine look famous just stuck in the middle of the shield, as it is called. Well, I wonder Miss Stanhope does not come—I sent my carriage to fetch her an hour ago. She takes more time to dress and beautify than the bride herself. Ah, there are wheels now! I'll go

and bring her up stairs myself; I dare say you can both spare me, eh?" with a knowing wink, as he left the room.

Anxious to break the awkward silence, Mr. Fitzgerald glanced at the graceful costume of his bride, and remarked upon its taste and becomingness.

"I am very glad you like it," said the gratified girl, "for you always know what is right. I remembered hearing one of my schoolfellows, Lady Janet Tweedale, describe the dress of her sister when she was married to Sir Ronald Fitz-James, and I thought I could not do better than order the same. I consulted Madame Blancheville, too, with whom, you know, I was at Kensington, who is very observing and particular in dress; and she thought nothing could be better than this Brussels lace, for which I have a veil to match. My maid assures me she can arrange it perfectly, which Madame Blancheville says is a very difficult thing to do properly; *comme il faut*, as she calls it; and

wanted papa to ask her to come to the
emony to-day, that I might have been sure
rything was right; but papa said it would
ver do to have a schoolmistress, though
adame Blancheville always declares she is a
untess in her own right, only her family
t all their fortune at the French Revolution,
d she cannot afford to resume her title yet,
ough she hopes to do so in a few more
ars."

"I am very sorry, my dear Louisa, you have
t Madame Blancheville's attendance on this
y, as you wished it. The presence of so
l a friend might have been pleasant to you;
d I would have requested your father's con-
nt, if you had only asked me. You may
y on my always endeavouring to gratify all
ur desires; and surely am I especially bound
this"—*happy* morning, he would have said,
t the word stuck in his throat; and he
uld not but remark, that the presence of the
rliest friend of her childhood, and the in-

structress of her youth, was only wished for to ensure the correct adjustment of the bridal veil; and while he observed this, he thought that with a mind thus constituted, his task of imparting happiness would be a less difficult one.

"You are always very kind and considerate to me, dear Mr. Fitzgerald, I am sure," said Louisa; "and I shall like very much some day to drive with you to Kensington, and introduce you to Madame Blancheville."

A latent feeling of complacency came over her mind, at the idea of going among her old companions as Mrs. Fitzgerald, and losing the degradation of the shop-keeper's daughter, under this patrician name.

At this moment the door opened for Miss Stanhope, and the other guests who were to be present at the ceremony. Miss Stanhope told them her father already waited them at the church, and after a quarter of an hour's retirement in her own dressing-room, for the im-

portant addition of the bridal veil, the bride returned, redolent with orange-flowers and perfumes, and a pocket-handkerchief from Paris which cost fifty guineas.

Mr. Jenkinson had ordered his gardener to ransack the gardens and conservatories for the best flowers, with which to strew the church and path, from the carriages, and paid six little girls, dressed in white, to be stationed at the churchyard-gate, and to precede the bride, that as she advanced,

"Roses and myrtles might obstruct her way."

The effect of this pretty device was sadly marred by a heavy shower of rain falling just before the bridal cavalcade drove up to the church, and the poor little drenched Floras, fearing the rage of Mr. Jenkinson, or the loss of their reward, if they fled their post, resolutely braved the pitiless storm, and, instead of delicate white frocks, and smart little caps trimmed

with ribbons and orange-flowers, they seemed but one saturated sponge, from which the water dropped on the path of the bride, as, with her white satin shoes, she picked her way over the wet flowers.

The bells rang a merry peal at the conclusion of the ceremony, and Mr. Jenkinson had even bought a cannon for the occasion, to fire off on his lawn, upon a signal from the church of his daughter really being made Mrs. Fitzgerald but there were here no hearty congratulations tenantry, or a train of attached peasantry and old servants, to crowd with happy smiling faces around. All with Mr. Jenkinson was new from his smartly-built villa, and ungrown plantations, to the liveries of his servants, and his own coat for this joyous occasion.

The wealthy citizen was only known or cared for by the wealth and depth of his purse, which was more apt to flow in public and ostentatious charities, than in those private and gentle kindnesses, which yield their cheering balm

the humble cottage and secluded bed of sickness and old age, making the widow's heart to leap for joy, and the fatherless be glad. Louisa Jenkinson was only known as the rich heiress, who always appeared in the smartest equipage and decked in the gayest apparel of any in the neighbourhood, and as such, with no honest and heartfelt interest was the gay *cortège* gazed at by the poorer inhabitants of Highgate, as they stood at their open doors. The bride had to smile on no respectful curtseys or lowly-doffed hats, as she returned to her paternal home.

There a sumptuous breakfast awaited them, and in due course of time the changing of dress and the bidding adieux were gone through, and Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald, "the happy pair," as a morning paper described them, "set off in an elegant new travelling chariot and four, *en route* for Italy."

CHAPTER XI.

"Udvallo il vel paese
Che Appenin parte, e il mar circonda, e l'Alpe."

PETRARCA.

LETTER FROM MRS. FITZGERALD TO HER FATHER.

"Palazzo d'Estella, Rome.

"My dear Papa,

"Here, then, we are established in 'the city of the world, imperial Rome,' and, if I did not know how little you care for such things, I should wish for you to share our pleasure in seeing all the beautiful buildings, and statues,

and paintings, which we spend our mornings in viewing.

"Our evening occupations, perhaps, would please you better, for we are completely in the society of what may be called the 'great world' here; and, besides a great many foreign princes and princesses, there are a large circle of English nobility, many of whom Mr. Fitzgerald previously knew, and has brought introductions to others. I little wonder now at the distaste he showed, or perhaps, I should rather say, his indifference to our Highgate and London society, when I see the superior *agrémens*—but I forget, you do not like French words—I would say the superior agreeableness of that in which I am now living. At first, I thought I should be very much afraid of all these fine great people, but I found there was no occasion to be so; and, I assure you, they are much less assuming in their manners than Mrs. Buggins, and never talk of all their smart things like Mrs. Dobbs, but seem to think it a matter of course that

everybody has carriages and servants, and [illegible] monds, and so on.

"Mr. Fitzgerald is very much admired by everybody, and seems more lively than he used to be at Clareville Villa, but perhaps it is because we are always out here, and there is really no time ever to be grave or alone either. He is always very kind to me, and even says that I am thought quite a beauty here, where fair complexions and light hair are quite the favourites, though I admire the Italian ladies very much, with their brilliant dark eyes and majestic figures.

"I find I can get on with talking the Italian language very tolerably, but, as Mr. Fitzgerald tells me my voice suits the French best, I generally speak that, which most people understand here.

"I hope you will write soon, my dear Papa, and tell me you are quite well, and do not miss me much. Give my love to Miss Stanhope, and tell her I will write to her soon.

"Mr. Fitzgerald desires his remembrances, and I remain, dear papa,

"Your affectionate and dutiful daughter,

"LOUISA FITZGERALD."

"P.S. The house we are living in is called a Palazzo, which sounds very grand, does it not?"

We shall best express Mr. Jenkinson's pleasure at the perusal of this letter, by giving his reply, written in the same precise hand and concise style with which he would have made out a bill of parcels:

"Clareville Villa.

"Dear Daughter,

"Your letter of the 16th inst, came duly to hand, and I am glad you and Mr. Fitzgerald have got safe to Rome. You are quite right in thinking I should not care a brass button for all the fine statues and paintings; and, as for the buildings, I don't suppose as how many are

finer than our Clareville Villa, which you know was planned by an architect who had been at Rome. And, as for our St. Paul's in London, or the Bank even, I don't suppose you see anything to compare to them. However, as you are among such great people, and make quite one of themselves now, as a body may say, I am very glad you have gone to these foreign parts, though I shall be pleased to see you home again. I cannot help but feel dullish like sometimes, without you; but my main wish is satisfied in seeing you a real downright lady, which I have been plodding and plodding after this many a day, but never should have succeeded in, if Mr. Fitzgerald, or some such gentleman, had not taken a fancy to you. I shall like to hear if you meet any of your hoity-toity Kensington schoolfellows, who would never condescend to come to Clareville Villa, because, forsooth, my money was in trade, and not in dirty acres, and if they are more civil and sociable now. I don't often trouble myself to read any of your fashion-

able newspapers, but I took up one to see if your marriage was put in, as I paid for its being done, all in right style, and I observed that Lord and Lady Lancaster, with the Lady Plantagenets, were gone to Rome, and I bethought me perhaps they would be glad to know you now, though they did not think Louisa Jenkinson a fit companion for Lord's daughters. I reckon they may think different now, and do not fail to tell me if you see them. I don't often see Miss Stanhope, but it will be a great feather in their cap, no doubt, if you write, so you may as well please them when you have time. I never wrote so long a letter, except on business, before, so now, dear daughter, no more from your affectionate father,

"OLIVER JENKINSON."

"Please to present my best respects to Mr. Fitzgerald. I always thought him a right-hearted chap, or I should not have liked him to be your husband, in spite of his grand name."

The day after the receipt of her father's letter, Mrs. Fitzgerald was left for a few moments in one of the most fashionable shops in Rome, selecting a set of mosaic ornaments, while her husband crossed the Strada, to speak to a friend who was passing, when three ladies entered, whom Louisa recognised immediately as the Countess of Lancaster and the two Ladies Plantagenet. She saw, too, that she was known by them; and forgetting that she understood French as well as themselves, a conversation in an under tone commenced, but perfectly reaching her ears.

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed the elder sister, "I believe there is that odious little Jenkinson, with whom Madame Blancheville disgraced her establishment, and which surely ceased to be select when a tradesman's daughter was admitted, even though he might be a *millionnaire*. You remember how she pestered us with attempts to renew the acquaintance after we left school?"

"As if it was not bad enough," added Lady Frederica, "to be associated with such *canaille* there, without being subject to the impertinence of being claimed as friends afterwards. What must we do, mamma? Or we shall surely have her again attacking us here; and I dare say that vulgar old father is not far off, though, thank God, we really are innocent of knowing him."

"Don't distress yourselves, my dears. I assure you nothing is easier than for people in our rank of life to avoid contact with those so immensely beneath us; of course, she will never be in the same set in which we move; and as to meeting her in the street, nothing can be easier than to pass at once with the easy confidence of an entire stranger." And Lady Lancaster drew up her tall and stately figure to its full height, as a hint to her daughters how to demean themselves, which was not lost on such apt pupils; and they rudely passed their quon-

dam school-fellow with the rude stare of "the cut direct," and busied themselves with some fine cameos, also lying on the counter.

At this moment, Mr. Fitzgerald re-entered the shop, and was rejoining his wife, when seeing her apparently yet busily engrossed with her purchases, he went up to the ladies on the other side of her with the outstretched hand of old acquaintanceship.

"Ah! Lady Lancaster, who would have thought of seeing you here; have you been long in Rome?"

"My dear Mr. Fitzgerald," exclaimed all the ladies at once, "how delightful to have met you! We are quite strangers here, only just arrived, and know no one, except the Princess of Dalmetta, to whom we brought introductions from Paris, where we have been some months. And, by the bye, she tells me you are a married man now, and that the beautiful Mrs. Fitzgerald is quite the rage, and the parties at your palazza

re the most *recherchés* and charming things possible. Pray give us your address, that we may ose no time in making the acquaintance of your bride;" and they might have added, "in obtaining cards for your parties."

"Your Ladyship's wish of being introduced to Mrs. Fitzgerald is soon granted," replied our hero; "here she is, choosing mosaics, and I know not what pretty things, besides. Louisa, allow me the pleasure of presenting you to my old friends, Lady Lancaster, Lady Augusta, and Lady Frederica Plantagenet."

To some, such a recognition might have been awkward, after a similar scene to that we have described; but never thinking their words had been overheard, all difficulty with them was over, and the course to pursue plain before them.

"Oh! my dear Louisa, is it possible this can be you? And to have been standing so close all this time, and never have seen you! But who

would have thought of your being in Rome, and the wife, too, of William Fitzgerald! Well, this is the most delightful thing I ever knew," said Lady Frederica.

"Dear mamma," rejoined the elder sister, "would you believe it, this is the very identical dear little Louisa Jenkinson you used to hear us rave so about in the holidays, and whom we have never before been fortunate enough to meet since we all left Madame Blancheville. How much we shall enjoy being together again! We must often come to you, dear Louisa; we are scarcely settled in our lodgings yet, and I doubt if they will ever be fit to receive company in."

"I am charmed," said Lady Lancaster, "to make your acquaintance, my dear Mrs. Fitzgerald; it is truly a fortunate thing for my girls this meeting with you, and there is nothing more delightful than the renewal of school friendships. If you are returning to your palazzo,

perhaps you and Mr. Fitzgerald will allow us the pleasure of accompanying you, and thus lose no time in going through the ceremony of calling, though as such old friends of your husband's, and my daughters yours too, will preclude the necessity, I trust, of much form between us, though we must submit to the *bienséances* of our rank in life," added the proud Countess, forgetting how completely she would have outraged every rule of politeness, in the case of a shopkeeper's daughter.

"You are very obliging, Lady Lancaster," bowed Mr. Fitzgerald; "I am sure Louisa will only be too happy to accept your friendship, so kindly offered. This is one of her public nights, and perhaps you will favour us with accepting cards for our conversazione, though I believe it is a ball; is it not, Louisa?"

By this time the bewildered novice in fashionable life had recovered from her surprise at the quick transition in manner and words of her

some friends, and had sufficient tact to be aware it was far better to let their previous conversation pass as indeed unheard, and themselves unrecognised, till Mr. Fitzgerald's introduction. Thus, without awkwardness, she replied, in her usual quiet gentle manner, to the more determined *empressement* of the Ladies Plantagenet, and suffered one of them to take her arm, for the purpose "of a more comfortable chat," as Lady Frederick called it, "about old days;" while the elder sister and Lady Lancaster took possession of a gay cavalier in the person of Mr. Fitzgerald, though perhaps the fair bride was by no means pleased with the monopoly.

On Lady Lancaster's and her daughters' return to the inferior lodgings in an unfashionable street, which needful economy obliged them to put up with, it was impossible to help contrasting their appearance with the elegant Palazzo d'Estella, which the Fitzgeralds had taken for the season, and ornamented with

many splendid paintings and specimens of *vertu*, which Mr. Fitzgerald's correct taste and judgment enabled him to discriminate among the mass of rubbish which is offered to the unwary and the uninitiated of the English travellers, who congregate in such shoals, and are frequently easy preys to the practised deceivers who assail them alike with flattery and cajolery. Many an honest John Bull, or cockney connoisseur, is inveigled by praises of his judgment to buy the most paltry imitations of the great masters, and at extravagant prices, under the assurance that so correct an eye and refined a taste must at once detect imposture, and a genuine Rubens, or, a Carlo Dolce, be at once recognised from a copy.

William Fitzgerald, in his happier days, had made the study of painting and sculpture one of his favourite pursuits, and he and Clara had fondly anticipated the delight of some day sharing together the enthusiastic enjoyment of

a first visit to Italy. He was now treading this classic ground alone; for he could find little companionship in the cold temperament of his bride, who would look oftener with interest into the minor details of a fine picture, the dress or the furniture, than at the heavenly expression of countenance which the artist had brought to speak, as it were, on the canvass. While her husband has been wrapt in silent admiration at a deep-toned expression of a Guido, she has quietly remarked that a satin or a velvet of that colour was never met with now, or that the style of dressing the hair, all thrown back from the face, was particularly unbecoming.

In a short time, the Ladies Plantagenet became almost residents in the Palazzo d'Estella and found the rich and now fashionable Mrs. Fitzgerald a most convenient *chaperon*. Lady Lancaster was left a widow, with a large family of young children to maintain with a comparatively small income, when the domain

of Lancaster House, and the whole landed property descended to the elder son, who had committed the folly of marrying a beautiful but portionless girl, and could therefore no longer share either his home or purse with his mother. He, however, consented that his house should be open to his younger brothers and sisters during their vacations; and the Dowager Countess determined to take her two eldest daughters to a foreign market, and was only too glad to find the hitherto despised Louisa Jenkinson able and willing to give them the *entrée* to her brilliant parties.

CHAPTER XII.

"Give me thy hope which sickens not the heart,
Give me thy wealth which has no wings to fly,
Give me the bliss thy visions can impart,
Thy friendship give me, warm in poverty!"

ODE TO CASTLE BUILDING.

If William Fitzgerald had been told a few short years before how the manhood of his days was to be spent, he would have cast the dark prediction from him with horror and disgust. Ere he met Clara Cameron, his visions of futurity were deeply blended with romance; with all the ardent temperament of his country, he looked to

is future existence being shared and hallowed by ome lovely being, whose image he sketched om painting, and from song. It was a favourite ccupation on the long days of summer to take is fishing-rod, as an excuse for idleness, and rowing himself on the margin of a silvery ream, which ran through one of the most cturesque parts of Ireland, he would fix his es on the blue-capped hills in the distance, d think that futurity, now hid from his sight, ight conceal scenes as fair and brilliant as ose he gazed on, lighted up by the rays of a estern sun:

At summer's eve, when Heaven's aërial bow
Spans, with bright arch, the glittering hills below,
Why to yon mountain turns the musing eye,
Whose sun-bright summit mingles with the sky?
Why do those hills of shadowy tint appear
More sweet than all the landscape smiling near?
'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
And robes the mountain with its azure hue.

Thus, with delight, we linger to survey
The promised joys of life's unmeasured way;
Thus, from afar, each dim discovered scene
More pleasing seems than all the past has been;
And every form that fancy can repair
From dark oblivion, glows divinely there."

Thus, in the beautiful words of "The Pleasures of Hope," would he indulge in many a fairy scene for the future, and draw from thence some of hope's own brightest colours with which to imbue the present.

The reality of life was, indeed, found a strange reverse from the ideal he had loved to indulge in. At times, the natural buoyancy of youth seemed to struggle under the leaden chains which bound it, and the light of poetry and song once again brightened in his eye in this land of the Muses.

But it would not be—the fire was transient—the burden and the weight unceasing. For several years, their home was alternately at

Rome, Naples, and Paris. Mrs. Fitzgerald preferred a splendid *séjour* in these gay cities, to the seeking out the beauties of the picturesque and romantic scenery through which they passed, and amongst which her now delicate health would have prevented her scrambling enjoyment, even if nature had gifted her with any taste for such pursuits.

Her first child, now the Lady Mary Desmond, had been born at Naples; and several future disappointments of an heir had materially injured her strength, though in the luxurious ease which her ever attentive and considerate husband was careful to procure for her, she could enter into the pleasures of a Parisian winter with great zest, and from which they were called to the reverse of a secluded Irish home, by the dangerous illness of Mr. Fitzgerald's mother, who entreated her son to hasten to receive her last blessing.

He was preparing everything for their imme-

diate departure, when Lady Lancaster, who, finding the convenience of Mrs. Fitzgerald's carriages, opera-box, &c., had followed them to Paris, was unwilling to lose all these advantages, and earnestly requested Mr. Fitzgerald to leave his young and still much admired wife under her motherly protection, and not expose to her delicate health to the danger of a hurried journey in winter.

Mr. Fitzgerald, always anxious to consult his wife's comfort to the utmost of his power, was perhaps not sorry to be spared her uninteresting companionship, and to find she really preferred remaining among the amusements which surrounded her to sharing his melancholy journey, he made all the necessary arrangements for his immediate departure, leaving her undisputed sway over their splendid establishment and hotel in Paris, with Lady Lancaster and her daughters, nothing loath, established with her, as protection and companions.

There was no presentiment of a final adieu, when Mrs. Fitzgerald calmly kissed her husband on his departure, and ordered the nurse to bring their little girl to wish her papa good-bye. For a moment, his heart heaved as he pressed his darling child to his heart, and he bitterly thought that, under a happier destiny, the wife he would have chosen would not have let him depart alone and sad to seek the death-bed of his mother.

But he had no right to complain. He had never sought to wake any latent sympathies in the bosom of the being forced upon him as it were for his companion in life. He had rather endeavoured to foster the cold apathy of her nature, and teaching her to expect nothing beyond the polite observances of a kind attention, had chilled any warmth of love, had the sparks ever existed in her bosom.

She now watched him step into his travelling-carriage, and, as it rattled out of the court-yard,

she turned to Lady Lancaster, and quietly asked when they should go out for their morning drive, and what were their engagements for the evening.

The same letter which brought Mrs. Fitzgerald tidings of her husband's safe arrival at his mother's, also informed her, that very unexpectedly, the last intervening link between his mother and the title of the Earls of Desmond, was broken by the sudden death of a promising young man, by a fall from his horse, and that the present Earl was in so weak and declining a state, it seemed only doubtful whether he, or his own poor mother, the next in succession would the soonest be called "to that bourne from whence no traveller returns."

"And so, my dear Louisa," concluded the letter, "as I have not much to gladden my own heart with just now, you may at least rejoice that of your father by informing him of the unexpected addition of dignity likely

ɔ accrue to you; and, alas! for me, as it can nly come upon the demise of my beloved ıother, that in all human probability ere many ıonths are over, he may see you Countess f Desmond, one of the finest old titles in eland.

"I hope you take care of yourself and your ear little girl. I have no doubt Lady Lanıster and the Ladies Plantagenet will prevent our ever feeling dull; and, as the winter is articularly severe in this part of Ireland, and ır house not the warmest in the world, I ınnot but be glad that with your delicate alth, you have remained in your well-aired tel, and surrounded with all the comforts ıd *agrémens* of cheerful society."

Mrs. Fitzgerald was as much delighted by the ınouncement of her future greatness as her ther could possibly be; and in talking over ith Lady Lancaster this accession of dignity, ıe totally overlooked that it could only be

purchased by the death of her husband's beloved mother; and that the title only succeeded to her by a fearful rapidity of deaths, and some of an awfully sudden character.

But Lady Lancaster was much too worldly-minded to dwell on this part of the subject, and Mrs. Fitzgerald had been too intimately associated with her and her daughters, and imbibed their opinions, not to enter at once into the advantages of her approaching rank.

It soon spread among their Parisian friends, that the young, and rich, and pretty Mrs. Fitzgerald, was soon to have the title of Countess added to her other charms. Her visiting-list daily increased, and the noblest and gayest of the French Court, with our English residents, vied in their eagerness for her society.

Mrs. Fitzgerald began to think she really must be the very charming person which everybody assured her she was, and she promised soon to become the most frivolous and heart-

less of characters, when a violent cold, caught at a ball given at the English Ambassador's, laid her upon a bed of dangerous sickness.

Everything which money could purchase was brought to alleviate the sufferings of the invalid. The most celebrated physicians were called in—the most experienced nurses hired—Lady Lancaster and her daughters even stayed away from a brilliant *fête* given by the Prince de Joinville; but all would not do, the decree had gone forth, and the young and the sought-for was pronounced to be hopelessly declining to the silent grave.

Her husband and her father were alike summoned; and it seemed a singular coincidence that the very post which took these letters had that same morning announced the death of Lord Desmond and Mr. Fitzgerald's mother, giving the passing honours she had so much desired to deck only the bed of death.

Owing to the greater promptness of com-

munication between France and England, than with the retired part of Ireland in which Mrs. Fitzgerald was staying, Oliver Jenkinson was able to obey the call to his dying daughter sooner than her husband could arrive. To travel in a foreign country was putting the good citizen completely out of his element, but money will purchase facilities for most things; and with a well-filled purse in his pocket he found no difficulty in reaching Paris with all possible speed, and presenting himself at the door of one of the largest hotels, taken by his son-in-law.

"How is my daughter—how is Mrs. Fitzgerald?" was his first question to the porter, who, neither understanding his language nor admiring his appearance, which, never very smart, looked worse from a long journey and his own anxiety, was unwilling to admit him further, when fortunately an English footman came to his relief, who, soon finding out who

he was, replied with all possible respect, that "My Lady was still very ill—he feared no better, and my Lord was not yet arrived."

"'My Lord and my Lady! What do you mean by that? Is Mr. Fitzgerald, indeed, the Earl of Desmond, now?" eagerly demanded the aspiring Oliver, forgetting at the moment how transitory, how worthless at such a moment were worldly honours.

"Yes, Sir; news came a few days ago that the old Earl and my Lord's mother had died on the same day;—but I am afraid, Sir, my Lady will not enjoy her title long, the physicians think very badly of her."

"Eh? what do you say, eh?" said Mr. Jenkinson, a father's feelings now preponderating over all others; "but let me see her—let me see her,—show me up stairs, I say;" and the old man put his handkerchief to his eyes.

Distress always finds its way to the kindly feelings of an Englishman; and the servant,

doubling in respectful attention when he saw the unfeigned sorrow of his auditor, ushered him into one of the drawing-rooms, saying he would let Lady Lancaster know of his arrival, who would come and attend him to his Lady's room.

"Lady Lancaster, eh?—Lady Lancaster attend me? Why that would be a pretty go any way," muttered Oliver Jenkinson, forgetting there might be a difference in her treatment of the unconnected citizen and the father of the Countess of Desmond.

The stately lady entered the room with a costly embroidered cambric handkerchief in her hand, which she gracefully applied to her eyes, and answering the repeated bows of the abashed Jenkinson, who seemed at the moment to forget the omnipotence of his boasted money, which, to use his favourite phrase, "could buy up all the lords in the land," she graciously begged him to be seated.

"Indeed, Mr. Jenkinson, I have nothing but melancholy news to give you of my sweet young friend, Lady Desmond. You may be sure I have had the ablest physicians called in, and an English one, Dr. Fussington, is now in the house, and shall give you his opinion of the interesting patient. But, alas! Mr. Jenkinson, we must arm our nerves for the worst. The constant solitude of these sad scenes has been too much for the sensitive nerves of my daughters, who you may recollect were school-fellows with dear Lady Desmond, and I have insisted on their going to-day to a short distance out of Paris, for a little change of scene, though I could scarcely persuade them to leave their friend."

She did not add it was to join one of the most brilliant *fêtes* of the season, given at a country-house of the English Ambassador, and from which she herself had remained away with

the greatest dissatisfaction, only thinking Lord Desmond's return might be any hour, she did not think it would be decent for him to find the sick bed of the young Countess utterly deserted by her *soi-disant* friends; and he was too likely to have the power of being useful to her in the world, to hazard the loss of her footing and ascendancy in his house for the paltry gratification of a gay party.

Dr. Fussington now entering the room, Mr. Jenkinson was introduced as Lady Desmond's father, and, though the courtly physician was rather surprised at the mean appearance of his noble patient's parent, he was too much used to meeting with strange incongruities in the course of his practice, to let this operate for a moment on the silky oiliness of his manner.

He pressed the hand of Lady Lancaster, in both his own, and bowing low upon it, he took his seat beside her on the sofa, while with

gentle accents, he addressed Mr. Jenkinson.:

"Indeed, my dear Sir, I am grieved to the heart to be obliged to report so unfavourably of Lady Desmond. I thought this morning her Ladyship's pulse was a *leetle* improved, but now I can flatter myself with no amendment. But she is most sweetly composed, my dear Sir, and this quiet placidity of temperament is much in her favour. I had feared your arrival might have agitated her, but I informed her myself of the circumstance before I attended you here, and I could not perceive that her pulse varied in the least, and with great consideration she requested you would take some refreshment after your journey, and then come to her, which I think you may do, my dear Sir, whenever you please, without fear of injury."

The hint of refreshment speedily brought some for the use of Dr. Fussington, though the

father was too anxious to see his daughter to partake of any with him, and Lady Lancaster politely seeing him to the threshold of the door, returned to hear the gossip of the day from the physician.

The smart French maid, whom Oliver immediately recognised, gently opened the door to receive him, and conducted him to the bedside of her Lady, where a portly nurse sat on each side, for nurses will grow fat in France as well as in England; and, putting aside a delicate muslin curtain, lined with rose-coloured silk, which cast a subdued shade on the fair pale face of the invalid, removed the death-like hue it would otherwise have exhibited.

The hand, never famed for its delicacy, was blanched by illness, and, as it lay extended on the soft lawn sheet, still ornamented with some costly rings, the father almost forgot himself enough to exclaim "Why, Loo, your hands even

re grown like a real great lady's now, eh?"
; the expression passed not his lips—he
zed on the face of his evidently dying child,
d was silent.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Her cheek is pale, but no longer fair,
And the spirit that sat on her soft blue eye
Is struck with cold mortality;
And the smile that played round her lip has fled,
And every charm has now left the dead."

BARRY CORNWALL.

When William Fitzgerald, or rather Lord Desmond, as we must now call him, drove up to his hotel in Paris, the closed shutters and dreary aspect told that death had done his work within—that all which remained of the young Countess of Desmond was dust and ashes.

The widowed husband bent his lofty forehead on his hand as he ascended the marble staircase to the drawing-room—no one spoke—the servants stood in respectful silence round, and there needed no words to tell what their Lord understood but too plainly.

The drawing-room was empty, but he paused not there; he went to the door of his wife's apartments: the two fat nurses were dosing each in an easy chair in the ante-room.

"Leave me;" were the first words he uttered, "leave me; I will ring when I want you."

The door closed upon them; he double-locked it within, and, advancing into the bed-room, he was alone with the dead.

More than an hour had passed before that now silent bell was heard again; the nurses and my Lady's maid appeared at the summons, and Lord Desmond calmly demanded all particulars of the sad event, though his manly countenance

showed the traces of recent tears and suppressed emotion.

He was told that the Countess had sunk into insensibility the day following her father's arrival, and that it was scarcely perceptible when life became extinct, so tranquilly the spirit passed away. Lady Lancaster and her daughters quitted the house immediately after the closing scene, saying they could be of no further use, and the gloom was too much for their sensitive spirits, leaving, however, a note for the bereaved husband, which we shall transcribe as a useful copy to all worldly-minded "women of quality."

"My dear Lord Desmond,

"I am sure I need not assure you of the deep sympathy felt by my daughters and myself in the overpowering loss which has befallen you. It will always be a consolation to us to know we remained to the last with the lovely sufferer,

and never thought of quitting your hotel till we could be of no further use, particularly as Mr. Jenkinson had arrived himself, from whom, and the very attentive nurses, you will hear the particulars of the last days of our lovely friend's existence; for I am sure you will be aware the witnessing such heart-rending scenes would be far too much for our affectionate feelings towards the dear, sweet departed.

"I hope, dear Lord Desmond, you will come and mingle your tears with ours, as soon as you are sufficiently recovered from this sad blow to see any one; and, if we can be of any comfort to dear little Lady Mary, by taking charge of her till we leave Paris, I hope you will depend upon our pleasure in doing so.

"Indeed, my eldest daughter feels so completely a mother's love for the dear child, and is so great a favourite of hers in return, that we were almost tempted to run away with her at once; but we thought, as her grandfather was

in the house, it might seem disrespectful to him, which we were particularly anxious to avoid."

"With every kind feeling of condolence, remain, dear Lord Desmond,

"Yours most sincerely,

"JULIANA ARTENSIA LANCASTER."

For a moment, a bitter smile of scorn crosse the fine features of the Earl as he read thi affectedly kind, but in fact, heartless epistl The hint also of Lady Augusta's *motherl* affection for his little girl was rather too broa for these early days, at least, and the plottin dowager had here decidedly gone beyond he mark.

Throwing the letter carelessly away, he aske eagerly for his child, who, brought to hin fondly nestled herself into his arms, and re turned his fond caresses with the endearin

name, "papa, papa," all she could yet say distinctly. As he stooped over her in tender affection, the tears again flowed fast and thick on her dark brown curls.

Let us not probe too deeply the source of those tears. The human heart is a difficult riddle to read. To say that Lord Desmond felt the loss of his wife, as he would have done one married under other circumstances, would not be true; but to say that he did not feel the loss at all, would likewise not be true, and unjust to the kindly feelings of his nature.

It was impossible to have been several years associated in the closest human ties with a young and certainly gentle woman, without in some sort mourning over her untimely death, taken away in the morning of her existence, and when the honours, and to her the happiness, of life were accumulating around her. She was, too, the mother of his child, and to a genuinely affectionate and sensitive mind, this

was the strongest appeal which could in this instance be made to its tenderness.

During this first gush of natural grief, the father of the wept one demanded admittance, and he could not have received a more gratifying tribute to the memory of his daughter than the tears he now saw on her husband's cheek.

But Oliver Jenkinson's was not a nature to care for any of the finer sensibilities of our nature, and his acutest grief now arose from the idea that his poor child had passed away from the earth before she had reached the zenith of her greatness, or rather, though attained, before it could be enjoyed.

It was a bitter reflection, that the Countess, his daughter, could never now grace his Highgate parties, or he himself be admitted to gaze on her high station in London. It seemed that the bubble had broke as he grasped it.

There was some consolation that she had left a child—that a Lady Mary would call him

andpapa; but then again it was mortifying
e was not a boy. The Earl would doubtless
arry again, and then the title of Desmond
ould pass away from the blood of Jen-
nson.

Still the old man did feel as deeply as he
uld do anything beyond money, and his desire
greatness, the loss of his poor Louisa, and
ars actually stood in his eyes as he saw the
nuine sorrow of Lord Desmond, and received
s unwontedly cordial pressure of the hand.
here is a something in sorrow which always
ems to draw us towards our kind, besides
e old man before him was the father of
s departed wife, and as such claimed his
mpathy and kindness.

"Ah, my Lord, this is a sad blow to all my
opes," said the citizen, wiping his eyes with
e back of his hand; "this is a sad thing to
se my poor girl just as she became a
ountess, and I could really have seen her

with a coronet round her brow, and called her my Lady. Directly that she wrote, and told me of the prospect of her approaching title, I ordered the most costly coronet which could be made, for her to wear round her head, and I have brought it with me now; and, poor thing, it was one of the last things she talked about, as I showed it to her. Ah, well, Sir—my Lord I should say—God's will be done! Mr. Stanhope always says in his sermons, that He knows best what is for us, and maybe it is so. Yet it is a bitter disappointment to me."

Dr. Fussington was now announced; and according to his usual manner with great people, took one of his Lordship's hands between both his own, and kept therewith a gentle see-saw, like a pendulum of a clock, and as well-timed, too.

"My dear Lord, I rejoice to see you returned among us. I have to congratulate you on your

elevation to the peerage since I saw you. When you left this for Ireland, my Lord, and recommended your amiable Countess to my especial medical care, I little thought of the sad end to my professional skill on her account. To be sure, she was always rather delicate; and I fear lately had exposed herself to more fatigue, and more crowded rooms than her sensitive frame could bear. It is some consolation to your Lordship, that no professional experience could have saved her. The inflammation settled instantly on the lungs, and the two most celebrated physicians in Paris were associated with me in consultations on the case; but, my Lord, we could only relieve and mitigate; it was out of human power to save.

"I hope Lady Mary is better to-day. Lady Lancaster thought there were slight symptoms of an approaching cold when her Ladyship left this, now melancholy house, and expressed her

anxious wishes that I should attend especially to the case, and report to her till your Lordship arrived yourself. There are frequent cases of feverish colds going about now—colds attended with considerable fever, which require some attention, and may frequently be stopped, if taken in time. Indeed, we may call the complaint a mitigated influenza."

"I think, Dr. Fussington, my little girl does not require any prescription now; you see she looks the picture of health," said the Earl, drawing his child forward, who was yet creeping close into his arms.

"Allow me to feel her Ladyship's pulse," said the Doctor, with great persuasiveness; "there is rather too much acceleration here," taking out his watch, "but perhaps the pleasurable emotion of your return may have excited this; and the same cause may have acted upon the flushed cheek, besides some possible irritation on her delicate skin from being pressed against

your rough coat. I have known some of such tender sensitiveness, that the finest flannel could never be applied without creating a visible crimson suffusion on the surface. I will just speak to the nurse in recommendation of the use of abundant warm water to-night, amounting almost to a bath, and I trust in the morning all these uncomfortable symptoms will be removed."

"Is there anything I can be of any assistance to you, my Lord, in your melancholy arrangements? If so, I beg you will command me."

And seeing it was no time to amuse his Lordship with all the news and scandal of the day, of which he was the active purveyor, he bowed himself out of the room.

"I cannot think," said Mr. Jenkinson, endeavouring to tempt his grand-child towards him, by the offer of a new sixpence, "why you gave your daughter the name of Mary. It

does not sound to me grand enough; eh! family name, my Lord?"

"No," replied his Lordship, "but i always a favourite with me."

"Well, to my thinking," said the c "Lady Almeria, or Lady Constantine, or such, if Louisa was not fine enough, have sounded better; but I suppose we a our whimsies, eh?"

CHAPTER XIV.

"Pien d'un vago pensier, che mi devisa
Da tutti gli altri, e fammi al mondo io solo;
Ad or' ad or' a me stesso m'involo
Pur lei cercando che fuggir devria."

PETRARCA, SONETTO CXXXVI.

LORD DESMOND paid the last tribute of pect to the memory of his wife, and hastened emove his little girl from the close confines of a r to the pure air of his own native country. e gay life he had led since his marriage was eign to his natural tastes, but he felt himself ınd, in every way within his power, to seek

the pleasure and happiness of the being he had vowed to protect; and in constant change of scene, and surrounded by gaiety, it was perhaps easier to rid himself of those tormenting remembrances, which furrowed his brow with care, and like "a worm i' the bud," cankered the germ of every enjoyment.

It seemed, too, as if a fearful destiny thwarted his every hope; for when death had broken his own bonds—when in spite of himself the thought would rush unbidden to his heart, that once again he was free—that once again he might think of his early love without a crime—an old English newspaper, which then reached his hands for the first time, told him the fatal end of his hopes, that Clara Cameron had become the bride of another, and even on the very day in which he had followed his poor Louisa to her early grave, did this intelligence meet his eye.

There appeared a strange, a fatal coincidence

ı this; his spirits shrank beneath the withering and of despair; it seemed more than ever as for him hope was extinct. He returned to is boyhood's home; his mother was no more; is father's feeble steps were tottering to decay; on nothing would remain to him to love on arth but his little girl.

He determined not to take possession of, or ather not to inhabit, the noble ancestral abode f the Desmonds, situated in a different and listant part of the country, till the last tie to the ome of his childhood should have ceased by he death of his father.

There is something inexpressibly dear in the aunts of our earliest infancy, where every scene s itself a feeling, and seems to tell of the first mpressions made on the mind, of the growth f intellect, of the development of genius, and it ay be too often of the germs of passion which nfluence the future life.

As Lord Desmond sate under a favourite old

willow, overshadowing the stream already alluded to, it seemed but as yesterday, when he had stolen from the *surveillance* of a private tutor, and escaped from dull mathematics, or some abstruse study, to idle with a volume of Petrarch in his hand, and imbibing all the deep love of the poet, breathed in the soft language of the south, would enter with boyish enthusiasm into his sorrows, and almost weep in sympathy for an ideal Laura.

Again as he trod a favourite honeysuckle-walk, he found himself indulging the train of thought there first engendered by the impassioned tenderness of Lord Byron's poetry—he had there entered into the misanthropy of "Childe Harold," the fervent passion of the "Gaiour," the devotion of "Gulnare," the generous love of "Medora." He had contrasted their characters — he had blended them till he formed an ideal character, which he in later days thought realized. There was the very stone on

which he sate to dwell on the beauties of the Dream, and identified himself, as it were, in feelings traced with a hand of fire.

He entered a moss-grown summer-house: it had been his boyish delight to aid his mother in decorating it with shells; many an association was interwoven with each varied pattern; his eyes grew dim as he gazed and thought of the voice which cheered him, was silent in the grave; he turned to the twisted oak of the doorway, and traced the date he had scratched with his penknife, on the eve of his first departure for college—it was the commencement of his manhood—began so brightly, obscured so early.

Thus every shrub, and tree, and path, bore to him a record of the past. One fine old oak was still undecayed; he had there read the history of his country's misfortunes, of his country's wrongs; his breast had first kindled under its branches, with the glow of a patriot

and a statesman; he had there thought how bright the achievement, how brilliant the destiny of him who could follow in the steps of her defenders, even unto death.

And was not this field of ambition yet open to him? It was, and with a greater prospect of success than even his boyish dreams had ever imagined—he was the last of a time-honoured race, the truest Milesian blood flowed in his veins—yes, he would bury the remembrance of his own sorrows in that of his country: he would rise in her defence. His arm was not called for in the field, but his voice could be heard in the senate.

From this moment, he strove to throw off the apathy which was benumbing his faculties. He prepared himself by deep study, and severe reflection, to make himself thoroughly master of the subject, and to analyze the degradation of his country to the remotest cause.

If his studies did not inform him so

thoroughly as he had hoped, what was the primary source of the misery which surrounded him, they at least satisfied him that much had lately been done, and was still doing, to call forth the numerous rich resources of the country, and to improve the morals and habits of the people, at the same time that freedom of conscience and equality of rights, already granted in the letter was beginning to be conceded in the spirit, by the present liberal administration.

The rapacity of governors and court favourites in former reigns, had led to the forfeiture of property, on charges of rebellion and treason, which too frequently, even if true, were brought on by the violence and injustice of those who were bound by every tie of mercy and generosity, of justice and christian charity, to defend and cherish the people over whom they ruled. Their property had been seized upon, their temples had been desecrated, and the religion of

their forefathers had been insulted, and endeavoured to be eradicated from the land. All this had so soured the minds of a naturally warm-hearted and enthusiastic people, that they looked with distrust on all who came from the seat of power, and persuaded themselves that justice was not to be expected for those who spoke the Irish language, and held fast that form of religion which was associated with their earliest affections, and endeared by every remembrance of the past.

Could it be expected that men should be contented and happy, when they saw that the means of public improvement which the government supplied, were wasted in projects for the interest of individuals, or, as was too often the case, found their way into the pockets of rapacious landholders and their agents, without even the pretext of undertaking the works for which those funds had been granted?

Could they consider it either just or right that their honoured priests should be left dependant upon the charity of a people already stripped of their property, and scarcely permitted, by the severest labour, to procure the coarsest food for themselves and their families, and that the lands and titles which had once belonged to these priests, should be claimed, and forced from them by men who scarcely ever came among them, or, if they did, scarcely found any among whom they might exercise their ministrations?

The generous mind of Lord Desmond forcibly entered into what must be the feelings of his Roman Catholic countrymen, and he could not wonder if they resisted what appeared to them such gross oppression and wrong. It would have been a disgrace to their humanity had they not clung to those priests who alone spoke kindly to them—from whom alone they could look for comfort and advice in their difficulties

—who were ready at all hours to do them a service, and whom they believed to be the proper mediators between them and the Almighty.

But he trusted that a new and brighter day had already dawned for Ireland; those in high stations now turned their attention to her wrongs, and not merely talked of, but acted on the principle that she should no longer be trampled upon and oppressed, and that, though the past could not be recalled, the future administration of the country should be such as to ensure justice to all, and cause every one to see and acknowledge that it was so. Attempts had long been made by a few enlightened men to obtain for the many who adhered to the Church of Rome equal rights and privileges with the few who had embraced the Protestant faith, to whom all power was entrusted, and upon whom alone any honours were conferred. For many years the attempt was vain; but when at length

the people roused themselves, and determined to to be free, they showed such a front as daunted their oppressors, and caused them to yield that to a sense of fear which no sense of justice could induce them to grant.

The boon was received throughout the country with enthusiasm, and many in the sister kingdom rejoiced to see so sure a foundation laid for the peace and prosperity of their fellow-subjects, who had often fought side by side with them on the field of battle, and contended with them in the great council of the nations for the common good.

In pursuing the subject, Lord Desmond could not but see and lament that many were deceived by the shouts of exultation, and led to imagine that all had been granted which was needed or required, and this doubtless led to much of the disunion and discord which marred further attempts at improvement.

In Ireland, however, they understood the

matter better, and, while they thankfully received what was offered, received it as the earnest only of what was to follow. The door was indeed unbarred, but it must be opened wide. A boon that was merely negative, could scarcely be received as a boon. A capability of being employed in places of trust, and power, and honour, was not sufficient, unless such were actually enjoyed, and to accomplish this, much care and prudence was requisite.

Lord Desmond could not but see that many difficulties remained to be conquered, and that it was necessary not to leave half done what had been begun so well. That the foundation which was laid for the union of all parties, or rather for the annihilation of all party spirit, must not be suffered to form the basis of new hostilities and new enmities.

It appeared clear to him that justice was now intended, but what had been retarded so long by suspicion and distrust, was daily and hourly

become more difficult to effect, even by those enlightened statesmen who were bending the whole strength of their powerful minds to the undertaking. It was also difficult to keep the easily-excited temperament of his countrymen in a state of quiescence at home; to teach them to be patient under all the injustice which too many yet in their sister island would heap upon them; to teach them to forget the past in anticipation of the future, and feeling strong in the justice of their cause, and the integrity of their present rulers, to curb their indignation at finding that some yet wished to treat them as aliens, and withhold from them that freedom and equality of rights which were enjoyed on the other side the Channel. They must be taught to feel that the battle had already been fought and won, and, though a few skirmishers still remained to give annoyance, they could not be deprived of the substantial fruit of victory.

Lord Desmond felt that to promote this

desirable end at home, his station and his influence might be of the most effectual service. But this must not be all. No! he would exert all the energies of his mind in the cause of his country, and rallying back those faculties which were now withering under the blight of private disappointment, he might yet bring them to bear in the cause of justice and humanity.

Looking forward, there was much to carry him on in his patriotic desires for Ireland. With safe and commodious harbours on every side; with rivers navigable, or easily made so, far into the interior of the country; with a fertile soil and delightful climate; with an active and intelligent population, prosperity could not fail to follow peace and union among themselves. A just and equal administration of the laws: education diffused among all ranks, and offered alike to Roman Catholic as to Protestant—with all these in prospect, Ireland might once more be happy, and thus invite the larger proprietors

to a more frequent residence, and gradually put an end to that system of mismanagement, by which an individual and his family are led to depend solely for their subsistence upon the produce of a few roods of ill-cultivated land, burdened with a rent out of all proportion to its value.

To effect such an end as this, Lord Desmond felt was an object yet left to him in life, and well worthy of all his energies.

CHAPTER XV.

"Il y a des momens dans la vie, ou le cœur parle beaucoup plus fort que la raison, et l'oblige a se taire."

CAROLINE DE LITCHFIELD.

"Oh, me! the word choose! I may neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike;
So is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father."

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

"My dear Lady Eastham," said the Marchioness of Stavordale, towards the close of that season which had brought Lord Desmond again into society, "I wish much you would advise

ne what to do; I am very anxious about my ear little boy; I am sure London is too close or him, he looks so pale and delicate. I can ake neither the Marquis nor his mother see at anything is the matter with him, and I m perfectly wretched. I am sure he requires ountry air, and nothing will make them hear f leaving town till a fortnight from this time, hen we are asked to the last ball of the ason at the Palace. It is the first invitation e have received from Royalty, and nothing ould induce them to leave before."

"I am truly sorry," replied the kind Lady astham; "I wish I could be of any use to u, for I really agree with you in thinking at your little darling does require country air. ould it not be possible for you and him to ave town under our safe convoy? You know e set off the end of this week. We have been all the previous balls and concerts given this ason by her Majesty; and being desirous to

leave early for Eastham Court, I contrived to let it be known we should have left London, and consequently have received no invitation, or rather command it must be considered, to attend the evening you mention. If you can thus arrange it, I am sure Sir James will join me in being delighted to escort you down to Kingsland House."

"This would indeed be delightful," exclaimed Lady Stavordale, clasping her little hands with joy. "You are surely my better angel. But, dear friend," relapsing again into gloom, "you know not how I dread a refusal. My wishes are never attended to. My dear, dear child—my only comfort—they will kill him, Lady Eastham, they will kill him!"

"Do not distress yourself thus, dear one," affectionately added Clara; "go and try your powers of persuasion. You know you are going to join us at the Opera. You will bring

me good news there, and we can arrange all our little plans for the journey."

"Ah," said the weeping Marchioness, "would to God I could think so; but at least I shall spend some happy hours with you. Ernest Cavendish told me he was to meet me here: without you and him, and dear Lady St. Clair, how miserable I should be! But you are always kind to me. Don't you think Mr. Cavendish s a very delightful person, Lady Eastham?"

"I do think," replied her friend, "he can nake himself very charming, and perhaps very langerous, too."

"Dangerous!" said the simple girl, "dangerous! I do not understand you. How can it ver be dangerous to be agreeable? I am sure wish everybody in the world were so; I should e much more happy than I am."

"For this very reason, perhaps, dear Theresa —for may I not call you so?—I would guard you against the contrast; I would warn you

against Mr. Cavendish gaining too much ascendancy over you. His attentions to you are becoming very marked; and, though decidedly the fashionable man of the day, he is not the most moral."

A bright flush suffused Lady Stavordale's dark cheek, as she replied: "Thank you, dearest friend, for this kind caution. I think I understand you now. I know that a husband ought to be the dearest companion in the world, but indeed it is not my fault that the Marquis is so seldom with me. I am sure he dislikes my society, and I cannot avoid those who are so very, very kind to me. I often think, if my father had not made me marry as I did, what a different creature I should be; but at home I am always under constraint; it never seems like *home*. I wish the Marquis would take a house of his own; perhaps I should be happier then; but the Duchess will not hear of it. I cannot tell you how I dread her bitter satirical

eches. I am sure she will be angry when I : to travel with you; but I will try."

With a heavy heart, she descended the stairs, l ordered the carriage "home," though with ne of the social feeling attached to that nprehensive little word.

"That is not home, where day by day
I wear the heavy hours away.
There is no home in halls of pride,
They are too high, and cold, and wide;
No home is by the wanderer found,
'Tis not in place, it hath no bound.
It is a circling atmosphere
Investing all the heart holds dear;
A law of strange attractive force
That holds the feelings in their course;
It is a presence undefined,
O'ershadowing the conscious mind,
Where love and duty sweetly blend
To consecrate the name of friend."

This was not the *home* which awaited the

young Marchioness of Stavordale, as she alighted at the house taken for the season in Curzon Street by the Duke of Kingsland. The situation was as gloomy as the family it contained; no sweet flowers greeted her with cheerful fragrance as at Lady Eastham's, and, crossing a dark hall, she heard the shrill tones of the Duchess in the dining-room, where she found the whole family assembled in solemn conclave at luncheon.

"I was just saying, Theresa," screeched the Duchess, "that I did not know you were using the carriage this morning. I had wanted to go as far as Kensington to call on my old friend the Dowager Lady Clarenceton. It is very inconvenient living at such a distance. I cannot take the horses out there a second time, particularly as you want them again in the evening. I declare it is very inconsiderate of you, but you never consult my convenience. I think you might at least have condescended to tell me you

were going out so early this morning. But you low-bred people never understand these things. I am foolish to expect it from the daughter of a West Indian planter. I suppose you think we are all slaves to obey your fancies as you choose, only I should have hoped that a Duchess and Countess in her own right might have escaped these indignities, Lady Stavordale, as I blush to call you!"

"Indeed, Madam," said the poor girl, used to this violence, "I am very sorry if I have put you to any inconvenience; I did not think the going out in my own carriage could have interfered with your arrangements, but, as I have only been to Grosvenor Square, it cannot hurt the horses to take them to Kensington, and, if it will be any convenience to you, I can easily walk with my maid to Lady Eastham's, as they dine early, and dress there. I can depend upon her setting me down at night, so I beg you will

make what use you please of the carriage for the rest of the day."

Somewhat conciliated by the gentleness of this reply, the Duchess deigned to be gracious during the remainder of luncheon, and Lady Stavordale gained courage to turn round to the Marquis and say:

"I am really very uneasy about my poor boy, William Henry, I wish you would allow me to take him into the country; you know when we consulted Dr. Jarvis, he recommended change of air as soon as possible, and I am sure he grows paler and paler every day."

"Nonsense! nonsense! Theresa," said the Duchess, not allowing her son to answer for himself. "I cannot think how you can go on teazing William Henry in this way about the child. One would think nobody ever had a boy before, you make such a fuss about yours, and I should imagine, as heir to the Duke of

Kingsland, the state of his health must be of much more consequence to us than it can be to you, and I repeat, there is nothing at all the matter with Lord Kingsland. If he looks pale, it is only because he is unfortunate enough to inherit your sallow complexion."

For once, the poor little Marchioness ventured a reply, and with a complexion certainly anything but sallow now, she retorted:

"You seem, Madam, to forget that I am Lord Kingsland's mother, and therefore feel a far dearer interest in him, than merely as the successsor of your family honours; but it was to his father I particularly addressed myself, and you will particularly oblige me, my dear Lord, if you will allow of my going without delay into the country with our dear child.

Sir James and Lady Eastham are leaving town this week, and have most kindly offered to be my escort, if you see no objection to my availing myself of it."

"Indeed I do see great objections to it, Lady Stavordale; in the first place, it is absolutely necessary that you attend the ball at the Palace; and secondly, I do not choose to put myself under any obligations to Sir James and Lady Eastham."

"Oh, I am sure," said the anxious mother, "we can easily get over these difficulties. There can be no doubt but the kind and known consideration of her Majesty will dispense with my attendance, when it is represented I have gone into the country with our sick boy; and, as for obligations to my dear friend Lady Eastham, I assure you that will not be thought of for a moment, either by her or Sir James."

"It seems very easy, Lady Stavordale, for you to counteract my wishes, but I tell you at once, your leaving town before the rest of the family is quite out of the question. However, to satisfy you, I will go and consult Dr. Jarvis, and if he positively recommends immediate change of air,

put myself to the serious inconvenience of
without my valet for a couple of days, and,
s an experienced traveller, he shall attend
ild and his nurses down to Kingsland
by the railroad, and return to me by the
onveyance the following day."

deed, my Lord, I entreat you not to per-
in this plan. I cannot part with the
I cannot bear, in his present delicate
, to have him taken from me."

ow can you be so absurd, Theresa?" in-
d the Duchess. "I am sure William
's proposal is a most considerate one, and
ew husbands would inconvenience them-
by submitting to. If you pretend to be
l of the child, you ought to be glad he
ve the benefit of the Kingsland air before
n take him. It will be a perfect matter
lifference to him at his age; he will
t as happy with only his nurses, and cer-
quite as well taken care of."

"I assure you, Madam, you are mistaken; the affectionate little creature is never so happy as when I am with him; and when his head aches, and he is tired, he always wants to creep on his mamma's lap: see, there he comes to answer for himself, with his little arms stretched towards me!"

"No wonder, when you make such a fool of him," said the considerate father; "children are never too young to be spoilt. But I do think, mother, the boy does appear pale; this must be looked to; I will go and see Dr. Jarvis immediately, and give orders accordingly. I suppose, nurse, if the doctor advises country air, you can be ready by to-morrow to take Lord Kingsland out of town?"

"What to Highgate, or Hampstead, or some of them willa residences, my Lord?—yes, sure, if your Lordship pleases, I can be quite ready by to-morrow, and make no doubt my Lady will come every day to see his little Lordship, o

he might fret, poor soul, without her, seeing as how he is so uncommon fond of my Lady."

"Why, you are as d—d nonsensical as your Lady, nurse. I had given you credit for better sense. No, I do not mean to send any child of mine to those cockney places you talk of; I intend his Lordship to be taken at once to Kingsland House, and I shall follow you with my Lady in a fortnight, or three weeks."

The nurse looked at the weeping Marchioness, and a tear twinkled in her eye, as she replied:

"Of course, your Lordship must do as your ordship pleases; but seeing as how the poor ild is ill, I never thought of your taking im to any distance away from his mother. lowsomever, my Lady, if it must be, your adyship may depend upon my taking every are of him."

CHAPTER XVI.

"Why should we anticipate our sorrows?
'Tis like those that die for fear of death."

DENHAM.

"Oh gods! who is 't can say, I'm at the worst?"

SHAKSPEARE.

ERNEST CAVENDISH was alone in Lady Eastham's drawing-room, when Lady Stavordale entered before dinner.

"Ah, am I so late?" exclaimed the yet agitated girl, "I walked here with my maid to dress before dinner, as the Duchess wanted my carriage. But I see Lady Eastham is

ady gone to her dressing-room, I must
ten to make my toilette, also."

'Nay, dearest Marchioness, hasten not from
before I have well spoken—this little
d yet trembles ; say, tell me, loveliest,
your devoted friend, what oppresses that
tle heart?"

'Would to heaven, Mr. Cavendish," said
now weeping girl, "that all were kind
me as you are, but, I know not how to
you, they have now the cruelty to send
darling child away from me. I could
e borne anything but that. He will die, I
w he will, and I shall never see him again,"
she clasped her hands in agony.

'his was a moment not to be passed over
the wily deceiver; all ideas of self were
in the agonized being beside him: he
ed her on the sofa, he passed his arm
nd her, and she wept unrestrainedly on
shoulder; he even for a moment pressed

his lips to her burning cheek, and she started not.

Every idea seemed swallowed up in the image of her dying child: she even moved not from her weeping attitude till Lady Eastham entered the room, and she threw herself, as she thought, only from the arms of one friend into those of another.

But an advantage was gained never to be lost by one so practised in those arts as Ernest Cavendish: the barrier of reserve was broken between them; he would take care it sould never rise up again.

Lady Eastham endeavoured to comfort the poor Theresa, and to persuade her the danger was not so urgent as she feared, that her anxiety magnified the terrors of a separation.

"Remember, dear one, I shall be within a ride at Eastham Court, and I will frequently go and see the dear little fellow, and send you full particulars of all about him. It will

certainly be much better for him to be out of town; and as the Fates decree you cannot go with him, do not fret about the matter. Come, you must wipe these tearful eyes; I shall lose all their brilliancy for the Opera to-night."

When is woman deaf to an appeal to her beauty? And when Mr. Cavendish added some whispered gentle words, and the hope that she was going to favour him with that brilliant head-dress he had aided her to select as so strikingly becoming, she went out of the room with her friend almost smiling.

There is an elasticity in the spirits of youth which no future period can restore. The Marchioness of Stavordale was yet a girl in years and in feelings. It was true she loved her child with all the passionate devotedness of a young mother, but it is not in human nature for this affection to engross all its energies;

there are other hopes and thoughts which will enter into woman's heart, and woe to her happiness and peace when her husband cannot fill up the vacuum.

But here, it was worse than this, not even kindness ever awaited her at home ; what wonder then that she should listen with a charmed ear, a thrilling heart, to all the soft blandishments, the tender attentions, of a man so perfectly skilled in the ways of the world as Ernest Cavendish.

Their circle at dinner presented the most striking contrast to the severe austerity of Curzon Street. There were none but friends present, Lord and Lady St. Clair, Captain Macdonald and Lady Georgiana, Lady Stavordale, Lord Desmond, with Ernest Cavendish and Cecil Aston, made up the party.

They were the same who had met at Lord Desmond's Richmond villa, and the recollections of that pleasant day was yet fresh

in their remembrance, and thus recalled by the re-union of the same individuals, gave rise to many cheerful reminiscences.

Lord Desmond now sought the society of his early love as sedulously as he had before avoided her. It seemed that now they had met, the spell which divided them was broken, and that he could only live in her society. It was surely a strange infatuation which blinded him to the danger of his situation, to the insufficiency which friendship must prove to hearts which had loved as they had done.

But his nature was too noble to think of danger in one sense of the word, in that sense in which Clara had herself applied it to Lady Stavordale; he would as soon have thought of wooing the chaste cold moon from her altitude as to tempt, or even one moment to wish his still idolized Clara to leave for him her husband's home, and sully the purity of her name. No; he loved her too well for that, and he

thought not that when honour remained, happiness could be wrecked.

The party went early to the Opera, for there was a duet in the first act which Lady St. Clair particularly wished to hear. She and Clara were learning it together, and there was a doubt how one particular passage was to be treated.

Lady Eastham's box was the adjoining one to her aunt's; and it was easy for them, prominent in fashion, as well as rank (for the terms are not synonymous), to be allowed the privilege of partially removing the barrier between them, and crimson-velvet curtains were substituted for a more decided partition. This night they were entirely drawn back, and the two boxes formed but one party.

As Lady St. Clair leant to speak to Clara on the song in question, she observed Lord Desmond bow to some one in the pit, and, following the direction of his eye, she saw a

most extraordinary old man, dressed in a rusty uit of black, eagerly bowing in return, and pparently pushing his way from his present tuation to join them.

"Verily, the Philistines are upon us," said e laughing Countess. "Who is that queer gure threatening us with an invasion, Lord esmond? I am convinced that gracious bow yours has inflicted him upon us."

"A name you would never have heard of bere, my dear Lady St. Clair, though well known pon 'Change, I can assure you. According his favourite phrase, 'there is not a Lord in e land he could not buy up.' His name is liver Jenkinson; but, to ensure some consieration for him, if he persists in forcing himself pon us, I will add that he is father to the late adv Desmond."

Clara felt that she blushed deeply; it was a ame too deeply implicated with the tale of her wn life not to excite the most painful remem-

brances. Lady St. Clair also understood the allusion, and the remainder of the song was unattended to.

In a few minutes, a gentle tap was heard at the door, and "my Lord, Lord Desmond, may I have a word with you?" sounded in accents but too well known to his ears.

"Pray admit the old man," said Lady St. Clair.

Clara only bowed her assent.

When the citizen found himself amid such a galaxy of female beauty, he absolutely looked bewildered with astonishment.

"Well, well, son-in-law, you have chosen well, I must say that for you, eh? Why, never such a collection of beauties could be found together, hunt all Lunnun through, I am a thinking. And they look like great folks, too, with all those bright diamonds sparkling about them. I say, I wish, son-in-law, you would introduce me. May be, they would not

be offended, and it would be a fine feather in my cap, eh? would it not, eh?"

This speech was meant to be in a whisper, but it was perfectly audible to Clara and Lady St. Clair, who good-naturedly spoke in Lord Desmond's ear:

"Oh, pray introduce us by all means, if it will give any pleasure to the poor old man; and do not omit the Marchioness. She is more glittering with jewels than any of us, and of higher rank besides."

Mr. Jenkinson's little grey, cold eyes absolutely twinkled with delight as he heard all the fine names he was presented to.

"Eh! well, to be sure, I am proud of this honour, ladies. I little thought of the good luck I was to have when Alderman Scroggins persuaded me to come with him and his son and daughter to the Opera to-night. See, my Lady," turning to Lady St. Clair, who was delighted with a character she had never met

with before, and whose smiles particularly encouraged him, "see, my Lady, that fat little man with a red waistcoat—it's cotton-velvet though—looking at us so with all his eyes—that's the Alderman; and that's his daughter, as fine as sixpence, by his side, and the young Alderman, as I calls him, with three gold chains round his neck. Ain't he a beau now, eh? There are not a few envious of me—that I can see. Well, to be sure, who would have thought of my being seated here all along with such great folks—eh?"

Lady St. Clair knew she was a privileged person, and could afford to be seen talking with an unknown without any danger of losing caste.

"I say, Lord Desmond," said the chattering old man, now he was set fairly off talking; "I say, son-in-law, that was a famous hit of mine, marrying you to my poor little Loo, any how; eh, was it not? but don't look grave; I didn't

mean to sorrow you now, any how. I never saw a Marchioness before. Well, to be sure, this one looks very gentle and pleasant-like (as if he had expected to see a wild beast). You know, I knew summut of Countesses before, for there was a Lady Lancaster staying in your house in Paris. Well, do you know, Sir—my Lord, I mean—if I didn't meet her the other day, and went right up to speak to her, only civil as I thought, and rot her, if the proud old jade did not turn away, and pretended not to know me. Now that ain't what I call manners; do you, my Lady?"

"No, indeed," replied the Countess, "I think it was extremely ill-bred. But I assure you my memory is not so short, and I shall be sure to remember you when we meet again," with a sly glance at Lord Desmond.

"Well, I am sure I thank your Ladyship: I wish all great folks were as sweet-mannered as you are, my Lady; but as sure as I am alive if

there is not that same Lady Lancaster in the box just opposite us, and her two daughters. Why she will be mortal vexed, that she will, to see me a sitting here, quite at my ease, as a body may say, with your Ladyship. Do you think she is likely to come across here, my Lady? I should like to see if she would speak to me now."

"There is no chance of that, Lady Lancaster is not on my visiting list, I mean," seeing the citizen look rather puzzled, "I mean that I am not acquainted with her Ladyship."

"Why, don't you great folks all know each other? I thought one Countess was as great as another."

"Oh, no, I assure you," said Lady St. Clair, now laughing outright, "there is a vast difference between us. Lady Lancaster is in a perfectly different set of society to mine; we never meet by any chance."

"Well, that is capital," said the delighted

Oliver; "I am glad that hoity-toity old lady is not at the top of the tree after all. But I must not stay here prating any longer, I shall affront Alderman Scroggins, that I shall, if I don't go back again; though this here chair is much more comfortable than that bench, besides the honour of being here; but it is not my way to offend old friends for new ones, so good night, my Lady. Your servant, gentlemen and ladies," bowing all round. "But I forgot to ask after little Lady Mary, I hope she is quite well: you must bring her soon to Clareville Villa, my Lord;" and, much to the relief of Lord Desmond, and even of Lady St. Clair, who was beginning to tire of his vulgarity, the old man bowed himself out of the box.

His entrance had made little difference to the rest of the party, who were either engaged with the Opera, or each other. Lord St. Clair and Cecil Aston were deep in a political debate, Lady Stavordale was in the most dangerous

of all situations, listening to delightful music, in company with him she was so much inclined to love. Partially removed from the rest of the party, Theresa was concealed from general observation by the thick folds of the velvet, which Ernest Cavendish had adroitly and unobserved drawn before them, so as to render the corner in which they sate almost a *tête-à-tête*, with none of its constraint.

Perhaps the winning flattery poured into Theresa's ear, was never more genuine, and therefore never so really impassioned as on that night. She was looking remarkably well: the oriental style of head-dress, which suited her caste of features, was one blaze of jewellery, but adapted in that tasteful manner, which she never could have directed unaided by the minute observer of female costume by her side.

Altogether, she was a very attractive little person, with the versatility of spirits incident to

er age, and still more to the torrid zone of her ative climate, she had entirely banished all the orrowful feelings with which, in the early part f the evening, she had wept over her separaion from her child, and she gently returned the rdent pressure of her lover's hand, for such we ay now too surely call him, as he handed her nto the carriage of Lady Eastham, who was to et her down on her return home.

CHAPTER XVII.

"A glittering binding may cover
A story of sorrow and woe,
And night's gayest meteors may hover,
Where danger lies lurking below.
Thus oft in the sunshine of gladness,
The cheeks and the eye may be drest,
Whilst the clouds of dejection and sadness,
In secret o'ershadow the breast!"

MOORE.

TIME passes on in the same steady course, whether its wheels appear speeded by enjoyment or retarded by anxiety, and thus the day

came at length when Clara was to leave London for Eastham Court.

Since the evening of her ball, when the beloved of former years so unexpectedly met her view in the person of the most celebrated statesman of the day, when she saw the cold eye of the politician quail before her glance, and felt the hand which could guide an empire tremble at the touch of hers, her heart had been in a constant fever of excitement. This was veiled under the calm of a perfect composure, for she found it impossible to avoid the friendly intercourse which Lord Desmond now so sedulously sought, without betraying the latent feelings of her heart.

That her cheek looked paler, and her spirits less buoyant, was only attributed to the fatigue and late hours of her London life; and it was supposed that the country would soon restore her bloom and her smiles. No one observed the sudden starts as of awakened consciousness

in her usually equable demeanour, the cold deadness of her eye at one time, and its bright flashes at another. No one suspected the fearful struggle which was wearing her youthful strength, and preying on her youthful spirits.

Even Lady St. Clair, to whom alone the secret of her heart was known, and who, therefore, might be more awake to observations on the subject, had no idea of the fearful struggle which her whole life had become, and the desperate inroads which this mental malady was making on her physical constitution.

The constant dread of betraying her feelings, or showing more than friendship for Lord Desmond, never left her a moment's peace. She dare never unloose the bands of constraint that surrounded her; even in sleep, she dreaded the name enshrined in her heart, should, unbidden, find its way to her lips.

There seldom passed a day in which she was

not in some way associated with him, in walking, riding, or in parties: he no longer avoided invitations, but rather sought to meet her wherever he found she was going. Still his manner was so guarded, his every word so carefully bounded within the pale of friendship, that the most fastidious could have found nothing to condemn. In this manner, he deceived even himself; irresistibly drawn within the fascinating vortex of her society, he saw not the danger of his situation, and blinded his eyes to all but the charm of again being near her, whom alone he could ever love. He again saw the loveliest of human forms, heard the sweetest of earthly voices, pressed the softest of fairy hands, and he fain fancied himself happy—happy in all that remained to him, the charm of her actual presence, the solace of her friendship.

While indulging himself in this delusion, he thought not of the wreck he was making of

her peace of mind; of the hazardous situation in which he placed her happiness, and the possibility of renewing those feelings of ardent attachment which it was once the pride of his life to have inspired. And was it not still his pride? alas! too surely, yes—he would rather at this moment see every laurel of fame withered at his feet, the applause of thousands trampled in the dust, himself seduced from his country's idol and her hope, to be the inhabitant of the most isolated cabin on her shores, rather than relinquish the cherished conviction, that he had at least once possessed the treasure of such a being's devoted love.

But while these were his feelings, they were untinctured with selfishness; and if the truth had ever flashed upon his mind that he might be injuring her repose, however severe to himself the deprivation, he would that instant have resigned the soothing charm of her friendship, and the dear delight of her society.

But he only saw her calm, tranquil, and apparently happy—no tell-tale blush ever revealed emotions, which it was now the study of her life to conceal, if she could not conquer; and so completely did she effect this, so studiously was every look and word guarded, that no suspicion ever crossed his mind that she was not really what she seemed.

Surrounded with all that the world can give to its votaries—rank, fashion, and wealth, and more than these; blessed with affectionate friends, the kindest of husbands, and a numerous circle of admiring acquaintance, who could think Lady Eastham was the wretched woman she really was? Who could guess the real darkness of her heart, if it were concealed even from the eyes of him who had once read its every thought?

But he knew not the depth of woman's constancy—that though overpowered and apparently smothered by circumstances, there will

still remain some smouldering spark of love's first flame,

> "Which not the darkness of despair can damp,
> Though dim its ray as it had never been!"

Far more than rest to the weary traveller, than a haven of peace to the tempest-tost mariner, was the hope of quiet and tranquillity to Clara's jaded spirits, at her country home. She there looked for a cessation from the daily, hourly struggle with herself, and trusted that, removed from the dangerous influence of Lord Desmond's constant presence, she might once again lull her feelings into that calm, if not happy tranquillity, from which they had been aroused by his re-appearance before her.

Thus feeling, and thus acting, it is easier to imagine than to describe her disappointment, her almost horror, when Sir James proposed that Lord Desmond should become their guest during the ensuing Kingsland races, and

for as long a time as he could remain afterwards.

In vain, she urged they had already asked a numerous party. This could be no objection, the more the merrier, and their house could hold twice as many.

Then was added, the doubt whether it was possible he could leave his public career so long, whether he would like to bury himself in the country, and whether he had any taste for races.

These doubts were combatted with the assurance that all public characters allowed themselves relaxation occasionally; that coming to Eastham Court was by no means secluding himself, that he would meet many of the same London set, with the addition of others even he might be proud of as admirers, or friends; that he did not think him so devoid of taste as not to enjoy a good race when it came in his way; in short, Sir James was determined it should be so: he was pleased with the *éclat*

which would result from having so distinguished a public character his guest, and Clara saw that nothing remained for her but to acquiesce with as good a grace as might be.

The next time Lord Desmond came, the invitation was given by Sir James, with all the friendly earnestness of his nature, with the additional hope also that the little Lady Mary should be sent first, with her attendants, with the warm assurance that Lady Eastham would take every care of her.

The father looked beseechingly for a word of acquiescence, and Clara found it impossible to evade including the poor child in the invitation, without marked rudeness, and perhaps even betraying her own fear of herself; therefore, it was arranged accordingly, to the satisfaction at least, of both the gentlemen.

It was also the more difficult to avoid seconding Sir James's hospitable wish of receiving their young visitor, from the extreme

partiality she had evinced for Lady Eastham since their first accidental meeting in the Park. Many an hour did she spend in Clara's dressing-room, perfectly happy, if she might only be with her, and sometimes beseeching for Banquo to be sent for to join the party. The whole scene would have made an admirable group for a painter.

Clara's graceful form might be seen seated on a low stool on the floor, the fine old dog resting his shaggy head on her knee, while the lovely child was standing by, twisting his black curls round her tiny fingers, the elderly Irish nurse, the very personification of her nation's warmth of heart, looking with beaming eyes on her little charge, and the beautiful lady who was so invariably kind to her, and who mingled in her childish sports with a much lighter step than Nurse O'Halloran was able to do.

All this would do for the artist's pencil, but it must be a poet's pen to describe the varied

emotions which dwelt beneath—to portray the conflicting feelings in Clara's breast, as she gazed on the infantile likeness of him who was still dear to her, and as she kissed the fair noble forehead so strongly resembling his own, to tell the rebukes of her own reproaching heart, as she felt its life-blood kindle on her cheek, at the remembrance of the past, thus excited.

The gentle pathos of a Wordsworth would well describe the fond and innocent love of that child, as she looked with tenderness on all around her. Scarcely remembering a mother's love, which was never very ardently bestowed on her, all the treasures of her infant tenderness were bestowed on her father and her nurse, till this "pretty lady," as she generally called her, came to share it with them. Lord Desmond sometimes thought that this extraordinary predilection in the mind of his child, was one of the links in the strange destiny which appeared to govern and to controul him. And his breast

would throb with uncontrollable emotion, when she would clasp her little arms round his neck, and softly whisper, she wished she had a mamma like dear Lady Eastham.

It would also not be beneath the genius of a poet to delineate the honest attachment of the Irish nurse, who, loving the child whom she had watched over from its birth, with almost a real mother's devotion, found this feeling enhanced by imbibing her country's enthusiastic gratitude for the father, who had become the idol of his countrymen, and was looked up to by them as the bold and uncompromising defender of their liberties.

As the day approached for even a temporary separation from Lord Desmond, Clara felt the danger of a farewell, and contrived altogether to avoid it; she doubted the strength, not of her own resolves, but of her physical power of acting up to those resolves, and that the increasing debility of her frame might enervate

the powers of controul over her countenance, and reveal a secret she was labouring with her life to conceal.

She took an affectionate leave of Lady Stavordale, bidding her keep up her spirits till she followed her little boy to Kingsland, renewing the promise of frequently riding over to see him, and writing her an account of his looks, which she doubted not would be already improved by country air.

"Alas, dear friend," said the young Marchioness, "how heavily will the time pass when you are gone! Lady St. Clair following next week, and no one for me to fly to from the sarcastic observations of the Duchess, my only comfort will be in Mr. Cavendish's society. I wonder the Duchess likes him, as he is so kind to me; but she seems flattered with his attentions, from his being so much the fashion, and he is constantly invited to the house, besides his impromptu calls in a morning,

when he generally contrives to join our drives and walks."

Clara wished a parting word of advice, but knew not how to time it, when at the moment the subject of their conversation entered the room, and nothing but general conversation could ensue.

The following morning, she and Sir James set off at an earlier hour than was usual for a fashionable departure; but she feared the meeting *one* eye, even in the streets, and hoped it was yet closed in sleep, as they rattled out of London.

Their journey was enlivened with nothing worthy of notice, though they varied the scene by deviating from the general route. Sir James, heartily tired of London, was rejoicing in the prospect of returning to his favourite country pursuits, and did not observe the languor of his companion.

When Clara passed through the fine old

gateway which led into their park, and saw the smiling face of the poor woman, who was eagerly watching at the Lodge-door, to be ready to welcome them, she wished herself the servant, rather than the mistress, of that proud domain.

How little can outward circumstances tell the heart within? That humble cottager little thought this gay travelling-carriage-and-four contained feelings so little to be envied, as those of the young, the beautiful, the rich Lady Eastham.

But she exerted herself to overcome, at least for awhile, the leaden oppression on her spirits. It was unkind to her husband to return with heavy eyes to his so partially-beloved home; and with no corresponding pleasure on hers, it was ungracious to the many old retainers of the family, who were watching with unfeigned delight for their return, to meet them with no answering smiles. Clara's was no selfish heart:

ɔused herself from the corner of the car-
in which she was reclining; she had a
ly recognition for every well-known face;
when Sir James handed her into her own
, he gaily remarked the Eastham air had
ly done her good, and that for himself he
ten years younger and fresher than amidst
ust of London.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"It may be said of him, that Cupid hath clapp'd him
O'er the shoulder, but I warrant him heart whole."

AS YOU LIKE IT.

THE very morning that Clara left London, Lady Stavordale received the afflicting intelligence that her little boy was taken ill on his journey to Kingsland House; but the rapid travelling of the railroad allowed of no stopping by the way, which obliged the nurse to wrap up the poor feverish child in shawls on her knee, and hasten from the station where they stopped

with as little delay as possible, to reach home before he became worse.

But all her precautions had proved useless. He had become so excited by the fatigue of travelling in this manner, that when she put him into a warm bed immediately on his arrival, he appeared scarcely conscious of anything. Mr. Brown was immediately sent for, and pronounced the malady under which he was now labouring to be the measles; and how they would act upon his already weakened constitution he could not take upon him to say, but at present there were no unfavourable symptoms.

The first impulse of the young mother was to hasten to find her husband, with the assurance that now at least he would feel with her, and delay not a moment in flying to the side of their darling boy. So confident did she feel of this, that as she passed her own maid in the passage, she desired her to pack up what few things she should want, and be ready to attend

her as speedily as possible to Kingsland House, where Lord Kingsland was dangerously ill.

When she entered the Marquis's private apartment, she saw to her dismay the Duchess standing by his side, with an open letter in her hand; but this was no time for ceremony, so interrupting her august mother-in-law in the midst of what she was reading, she hastily exclaimed:

"Oh, my dear Lord! I have such sad accounts of our poor boy from his nurse. He has actually caught the measles, and Mr. Brown cannot answer for the result. I have ordered my maid to prepare my things for setting off immediately. For God's sake, ring the bell, and give orders for the carriage to be ready as soon as possible. We must travel by the railroad ourselves now, and trust to reach the dear darling before he is much worse."

The Duchess looked in astonishment at her daughter-in-law, for presuming to suggest, much

less to act, upon any plan, without her sanction, and sarcastically remarked:

"So you really think, Theresa, that you are to be the only person consulted in this affair; that your obstinate whims are to rule us all; but I assure you, you will find yourself mistaken. I, too, have received a letter on this subject as well as your Ladyship, and from a rather more respectable correspondent than your nurse. I have heard from Mr. Brown, and he tells me there is no appearance of danger in the case, and that he will write a further progress of the case by the next post. So at all events we will wait for the receipt of his letter to-morrow before anything is decided upon; without absolute necessity, it is impossible for us to leave town so suddenly."

"Oh! I beg, Madam, you will not disarrange your plans on my account," replied Theresa, in faltering accents. "I only wish Lord Stavordale to set off with me directly."

"You only wish my son, the Marquis of Stavordale, to attend your fancies at a moment's warning! And is not this sufficiently preposterous do you think? But I can tell you, he will do no such thing. We will all travel together as soon as the Queen's ball is over: it is impossible that people of our rank and consequence can show such disrespect to royalty as to absent ourselves. You may depend upon it, the effect would be dangerous on the public mind. Do you think no child ever had the measles before? But it is of no use reasoning with you: of late you seem to think tears especially becoming, as you so frequently favour us with them; but, as they are not the taste of our family, I shall take William Henry with me now to the dentist's, from whence my interest in your affairs has detained me till past the hour appointed. Come, William Henry, my carriage is waiting."

"But surely, surely, Lord Stavordale,"

expostulated his weeping wife, "you do not mean to say we shall not hasten to our child? You do not mean that this reply from the Duchess is all the answer you give to my request."

"Really, Theresa," muttered her Lord, "I cannot see what other you can require. My mother must be a much better judge of the necessity of our presence than we can be; and as she thinks it is needless, or at all events better to wait for to-morrow's accounts, nothing remains for you but to acquiesce in her determination. You had better not remain in this room by yourself, where you can find no amusement. Allow me to re-conduct you to the drawing-room, and I advise you to practise the new song my mother wished you to learn; it will pass the time till we return, when I shall be at your service for a walk, which I always think necessary for

my health, but I shall hope for a cheerful companion."

And with a caricature attempt at courtesy, he led the weeping girl to a chair in the drawing-room, and returned to the Duchess. In a few minutes, the hall-door was heard to close upon them, and the wheels of the carriage rattle from the house.

For some minutes, Theresa sate on the chair on which she had been placed, with her hands clasped before her face, through which the tears trickled fast and thickly. Then, suddenly rising from her seat, she hastened to the window to assure herself that her husband and his mother were really gone. At that moment, she saw Ernest Cavendish giving his card to the porter at the door, as he was turning away with a discontented air.

The impulse of the moment was obeyed, she flung up the sash of the window against

which she leant, and instantly attracted his attention to her; she saw the pleased surprise of his bright dark eyes, and, as he turned to the closing door, she distinctly caught his voice saying:

"You mistake, the Marchioness of Stavordale is at home; I wish to see her."

"Indeed, Sir," replied the porter, "it is more than my place is worth to let you in; her Grace has but this minute driven from the door, and her last words were: 'See that no one is admitted while I am absent; say that all the family are out!'"

"Nonsense, nonsense!" rejoined Mr. Cavendish. "I see Lady Stavordale herself at the window," and the action of his hand to his pocket, and then directed towards the porter, revealed the influence which prevented any further demur. The next moment his step was heard on the stairs, and, unannounced, he entered the room.

The poor Theresa's nerves were utterly unstrung, and unconsciously she sank into the arms extended to receive her. For several minutes, she sobbed unquestioned on his shoulder, when a gentle influence led her to the sofa, and, with one arm still supporting her, he tenderly urged her to confide in his devoted friendship—to reveal the cause of her present agitation—to depend upon his utmost exertions to comfort and assist her.

With a voice broken in upon by emotion, she related the fearful intelligence she had received of her child's danger—of the cruelty with which she had been refused permission to hasten to him, and her firm determination that for once, she would assert a will of her own, and that instant, while no one was at home to impede her movements, she would take her maid with her, and set off by the railroad to her dying child.

"I had determined on this, Mr. Cavendish,

hen I saw you at the window. I was sure u, at least, would be my friend and assist me. ou will go with me to the railroad. I know t how to proceed. You know my inexpe- nce. You will tell me what I am to do, and shall owe to you the blessing of once more eing my child. You do not refuse me, do u?"

"Refuse you, suffering angel!" exclaimed r impassioned auditor. "With my life would serve you—but no time is to be lost. Hasten ur carriage to the door; we must be away fore anything arises to retard you."

In an instant, his hand was on the bell, and e answering footman was desired to order her ıdyship's carriage to the door instantly.

Her own preparations were quickly com- eted; her attentive maid had already prepared hat was necessary for a hasty journey, and, by ne time the carriage drove to the door, she

re-entered the drawing-room in a travelling dress.

Mr. Cavendish gave her his arm, and, without the least idea of the important step she was taking, that it was one to alter the whole destiny of her future life, she was handed into her carriage, her maid taking the seat beside her, and, without ceremony or a word spoken, he occupied the remaining corner.

"Drive quickly to the railroad station at Euston Square, and stop at my lodgings as you pass," were all the directions given by Ernest Cavendish as the door closed upon them. The irrevocable die was thrown—that door was never again to be opened on Lady Staverdale.

As they stopped at Mr. Cavendish's lodgings in South Audley Street, his valet hastened to the window of the carriage, and bowed to the short-whispered commands of his master, when

›achman was again ordered to drive
on.

›n they reached Euston Square, a train
›out starting for the destination they

horses were quickly detached, and the
› fixed on the railroad. The tinkling of
ll, and the hissing of the impelling
like some gigantic and infernal monster,
› moment of departure was arrived. The
n was beckoned to the window, and
Cavendish slipped a couple of guineas
s hand, as he slightly said his services
›t wanted, and there was no occasion for
r the coachman, to hasten their return to
. Street.

nowing wink, told the man understood
t; and, before any of the august family
vare that she had left the house, Lady
lale was far on her road to her child.

›n she found that Mr. Cavendish still

retained his seat in the carriage, though it began to be in motion, she exclaimed with surprise:

"But you have not left us, my kind friend! See, you will be too late; they are already moving. I shall be sure now to reach my child in safety—a thousand thanks to you!"

"You do not think," he replied, "that I can leave you to travel alone at such a moment as this, dear Lady Stavordale. I will see you safe to Kingsland, and return by the next train."

The unsuspecting girl saw nothing to object to in this arrangement, but was only grateful for the continued presence of her protector; and even if she had objected, the objections would have come too late, for the mighty engine was already in rapid motion, and would not stop at the bidding of lords and ladies any more than at that of less patrician travellers.

At the next station where they stopped, the poor maid petitioned to be allowed to ride out-

side; for, like most of her class, travelling in a close carriage always made her really or fancifully ill; a request which Ernest Cavendish gladly assented to, finding her presence a bar to all conversation, at least of the kind he wished to sustain with her mistress.

Perhaps, too, there was no disapprobation on her part; and certain it is, that from this moment there was less of solicitude for her boy, and sometimes she was even brought to smile at the varied sources of amusement with which her companion beguiled the time. He was too well read in the human heart to hazard at such a moment an open declaration of his passion, or his purpose of never leaving her till she found his arms the only protection left to her.

He was careful not to alarm her with any such hints; his behaviour was that of the most tenderly-attached friend, and less of the lover mingled in his words than had latterly been the

Thus lulled into security, she thought not of the construction which the world would put upon her apparent flight with one little calculated to be the sole attendant of a young and pleasing woman. She only knew she was hastening to the sick-bed of her child, attended by a kind and watchful friend; and the purity of the motive sanctified the means pursued, at least to her own inexperienced mind.

The shades of evening were closing fast as they stopped at the nearest point to their destination, which was yet many miles distant. Post-horses were readily procured, but their speed seemed slow after the velocity of their late movements; and a dark tempestuous night had set in when they passed through the Lodge into Kingsland Park.

As they approached the house, all looked dreary and deserted: no lights gleamed in the windows; and the heart of the young mother throbbed with ominous forebodings as the great

bell sounded through the empty and silent mansion.

The nurseries were situated at the other side of the house, and it was some time before their summons was attended to by a drowsy housemaid, wakened from her sleep.

"Oh, my Lady, is that you?" said the astonished domestic, at the sight of the Marchioness, shrinking from the night air, as she waited for the door being opened, the intensity of her anxiety not allowing her to remain in the carriage. "We never thought of seeing your Ladyship so late as this, though nurse quite expected you would come as soon as possible to the little Lord."

The Marchioness stopped to hear no more: she snatched a candle from the hall-table, and rushed up stairs without stopping, till she knelt by the bed of the sufferer. The old nurse started at this sudden apparition of her Lady, for her noiseless, though rapid step was unheard

through the silent apartment; and so truly had her mother's feelings guarded against surprise to the little sufferer, that she threw off her cloak and bonnet as she advanced up the stairs, and now knelt beside him in her usual morning costume. There was nothing to alarm the little fellow in this, and, as she kissed his feverish cheek, he opened his heavy eyes, and murmured: "Dear mamma do not go away again, I have not seen you for a long time;" and seemed to relapse into unconsciousness.

Nothing could induce the anxious mother to leave her darling's side during the remainder of the night. A room was hastily prepared for Mr. Cavendish, and, before retiring to it, he sought the silent nurseries, and tenderly gazed on the suffering child. It seemed that death had already set his seal on those small, delicate features.

Even the callous heart of the man of the

was touched, and, as he looked at the
d mourner, who raised her dark, soft eyes
as if asking for comfort, he passed his
cross his brow, and wiped away a falling

action was not unnoticed by the nurse,
" God bless you, Sir, for being so kind to
or Lady; she needs some one to comfort
thought, surely, my Lord would have
at such a moment as this," seemed to rush
sciously to her lips.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Yes, thou art fled, and saints a welcome sing;
Thine infant spirit soars on angels' wing."

CUNNINGHAM.

EARLY the following morning, Mr. Brown was at the bed-side of his little patient, which he had not left long the preceding night, before the Marchioness arrived, and his grave face and few words told that he saw no amendment.

After hoping Lady Stavordale would not fatigue herself too much by watching all night,

r her long and harassing journey, he in-
red for the Marquis, saying he wished for a
words with him.

On being told he was still in town, his
flushed from feelings, perhaps rightly
rpreted by the nurse, as she remarked:

'Yes, Sir, my Lord has not come with my
r Lady, though, if I mistake not, the hour is
far distant when he will bitterly reproach
self for letting her Ladyship travel all this
without him. But, thank God, she has
ind supporter in Mr. Cavendish, who is
in the house, and she will want more
fort yet before the Marquis arrives. I am
id, Sir, you can see no improvement in Lord
gsland?"

t this moment, the child's eyes opened lan-
lly, and he seemed to have scarce strength
ay:

Mamma. I don't see mamma; is mamma
e again?"

"No, my darling; I am here by your side," said the weeping parent, clasping his little burning hand in both hers.

"I hear your voice, mamma, but I cannot see you," and, as he spoke, a fearful convulsion passed over his frame; his limbs became rigid, and his eyes turned wildly in their sockets.

Lady Stavordale thought the agonies of death were come, and her child was passing from her love; but the more experienced doctor and nurse knew that moment was not arrived, though these symptoms appeared but too sure fore-runners of the event.

Every remedy was applied that skill and tenderness could devise; but it was long before the fearful struggle, as it were, between life and death ceased, and the little sufferer lay again calm and composed.

"My dear Lady," said the kind-hearted Mr. Brown, I grieve to see you exposed to the sight

of these attacks; but we trust they are not in reality so painful as they appear, and it is by no means a certain sign of a fatal termination. Still, dear Lady, I should deceive you, were I to disguise the presence of much danger. The eruption has gone, you see—entirely disappeared — and this pressing inwardly on the system is the cause of these distressing symptoms. The case is so plain, it is useless the calling in further advice. The result must remain in the hand of God. I will not leave the house, but have a few minutes conversation with the friend who has accompanied you down. He will advise with me as to the best method of informing the Marquis of these unpleasant symptoms ,which will doubtless hasten his arrival."

Ernest Cavendish really heard with concern that the hours of the poor child were numbered, though it was the most likely thing in

the world to further his plans, and woul
move the only tie which the Marchioness
regret breaking in the Kingsland family.
had long made up his mind that the best
sible thing for himself was to obtain Th
and the princely fortune now devolving en
on herself.

No scruples of morality stood in his
and he positively thought he should do
kindness in severing the bonds which u
her to a tyrant husband; and, to do him ju
never for an instant wavering in his
mipation of making her legally his wife,
a divorce was positively obtained.

There was an *éclat* in the whole thing
rather suited his taste. She was of high
though hitherto little known in fashionable
and, if perchance some might scruple to r
the *divorcée*, there were enough into
society her splendid wealth would soon bu

an entrance. And for himself, he should rather rise than lose caste among his associates by such an adventure.

With these thoughts in his mind, he stole, by Mr. Brown's desire, to the side of the anxious watcher, and supplicated that she would take a few minutes' repose, while he and the doctor took her place by the bed. At first, she steadily refused, but seeing her child, as she hoped, in a quiet slumber, but which in fact was the presence of his approaching dissolution, she allowed herself to be beguiled into the drawing-room; and, wrapping her in a shawl, Ernest Cavendish persuaded her to lie down on the sofa, with the solemn promise he would return and fetch her if any change took place.

For a few minutes, her temples throbbed too much to think of rest, but imperceptibly the violence abated, and nature thoroughly ex-

hausted, overcame her mental anxiety, as she sank into a deep and profound sleep.

Three hours had elapsed ere she awoke. Ernest Cavendish was seated by her side; she started wildly up. All who have waked on the first reality of sorrow such as hers, know the intensity of feeling, when reason again returns on the benumbed faculties.

"My child! my child!—you have left him—how is he?"

"My dearest Theresa," staying her departure by throwing his arms around her, "listen to me. Your dear child is better, much better. Compose yourself, my love. I am sure you wish his happiness; he is far happier than you could ever make him—he can never suffer more!"

"My God, he is dead!" exclaimed the mother, and sank into long and complete unconsciousness into the arms which received her.

When she recovered from this death-like swoon, she found herself lying on her bed, Mr. Brown standing at one side, and Mr. Cavendish holding her hand at the other—her maid weeping in silence at a distant part of the oom.

"My dear Lady, you will be better now—ompose yourself. The bitterness of death is ver to your darling child, and his gentle spirit assed, as it were, in sleep."

"And his mother was not with him! Oh! Ir. Cavendish, you promised to fetch me—it, thank God, *you* were with him;" and ere was a meaning in this little word, a essure from the soft hand within his own, hich spoke far more to him than reached the rception of the doctor.

"I assure you, my dear Madam, Mr. Cavensh has not deceived you; for two hours, we pt watch by the bed, there was no perceptible ange of countenance, but I gradually found

the pulse grow fainter under my touch, till at length all was still. I never witnessed a more peaceful end, a gentler passage to eternal felicity."

* * * * *

About two hours after this painful scene, wheels were heard rapidly approaching the house. It is the Marquis, thought the weeping mother, and no thrill of pleasure or of comfort came with the idea of a husband's presence; but the sound stopped not at the front door. Ernest Cavendish went to the window, and saw a hack-chaise driving round to the stable-yard. In a few minutes, suspense was ended by the Marquis's own man entering the room, and presenting a letter to her Ladyship, which he said his Lord had commanded him to deliver without a moment's delay into her own hand.

"That is sufficient," said Mr. Cavendish, as

the man yet lingered in the room: "her Ladyship does not require your presence while she reads the letter."

"It is not my place, Sir," retorted the valet, in an impertinent tone and manner, "to receive my orders from you. I shall wait for my Lady's commands."

"Leave the room, Benton!" said the Marchioness, partially raising herself from the sofa, and looking at the letter she still held unopened, "leave the room, I will ring if I want you!"

She gazed on the hand-writing; it was that of the Marquis; she turned to the seal, as if to divine the contents from its device. It was the armorial bearings of the Kingslands, with their ducal coronet: it had not then probably been sealed by her husband himself, but in the dressing-room of the Duchess, where she knew this seal was kept on the

writing-table, for despatches of any consequence.

"Do you know, dear friend," murmured Theresa, half indistinctly from nervous fear and previous weeping, "I feel a strange dread in opening this letter: do read it for me," and she placed it in Ernest Cavendish's hand.

He instantly tore it open, and found it merely contained a few lines from the Duchess of Kingsland and in her own crabbed handwriting. The words were few, but they decided the fate, be it for weal or woe, of the young creature to whom they were addressed.

"The Duchess of Kingsland writes by the express desire of the Marquis of Stavordale to inform the Marchioness, that it is his command she immediately returns to the home she has quitted in such an extraordinary and

improper manner. The Marquis thinks it unbecoming his dignity to come to fetch her himself, but has again put himself to the inconvenience of sending his own valet with this letter, under the expectation that she will lose not a moment's time in commencing her journey.

"Should Lady Stavordale be infatuated enough not to obey this command instantly, the noble family of Kingsland will feel themselves called upon to commence those legal proceedings which will at once free them from so foul a blot upon their escutcheon."

"Do not be grieved, my own Theresa, at this letter," said the now avowed lover, "it is all I could most have wished; it leaves you not a choice, but to quit at once this insulting family, and take refuge with a friend, nay, start not, dearest, with a husband, who will adore you. I expected this explosion; my carriage and servant are already here: I wait

but your permission to order post-horses, and depart on the moment for a foreign country, where we will live *incognito*, till a legal release from your present bonds leaves you at liberty to bestow this dear hand on me."

It is needless to follow him through all the sophistry of argument which he pursued to blind her judgment and mislead her reason; and surely if ever woman had excuse for the fatal step she was taking, it was the inexperienced and truly friendless being before us.

Indeed, it scarcely seemed as if any other course was open to her—to obey the brutal commands of her husband, conveyed in the most degrading terms by his yet more brutal mother, was only to rush on contumely and contempt, and to expose herself to the bitterest revilings, without the only solace which her home had ever offered her, the smiles of her

On the contrary, all that love and tenderness could give, was offered on the other hand, with constant attention, and unvarying kindness; for this, she might forfeit the esteem of the world, she might expose herself to insult and contempt; but was not the compensation more than equivalent to the risk she ran?

That she thought so under her present wretched feelings can scarcely be wondered at, and, if her determination wanted the final decision, it was given by the impertinent Benton entering the room, and with a freedom of manner gained from what he had heard pass between his Lord and the Duchess, he abruptly said, "the carriage was at the door, and his orders were to see that she returned with him immediately. He had communicated this to her Ladyship's maid, who had re-packed her things accordingly, and they now only waited for her Ladyship."

Such a communication seemed at once to

raise poor Lady Stavordale's spirit, and to rouse her to instant exertion: without, as was her wont, waiting for permission or counsel, she acted at once and decidedly.

Her voice was calm, though commanding, as she spoke. "Fetch the nurse and my own maid here, and return yourself with them; at the same time, desire horses to be put immediately to Mr. Cavendish's carriage, and his servant to be in readiness."

The man, somewhat awed by the firmness of her manner, bowed, as he left the room.

"My own Theresa," said her lover, really alarmed; "what are you doing? Surely, surely, you are not abandoning me for ever, and returning to slavery and degradation, you, who ought——"

She stopped his mouth with her hand, adding affectionately:

"This once, Ernest—for so I may now call you—I act without your advice; trust me, I

will do nothing you disapprove: but speak not now, I wish to retain firmness to go through this last scene with a due sense of my own injuries."

As she spoke, the attendants she required entered the room. The Marchioness drew herself up with more dignity than she had ever before assumed, and her words were at once cool and decisive:

"Nurse, I call upon you to bear witness, it may be soon in a Court of Justice, that I came down here solely and purely with the motive of seeing my dying child; Lord Stavordale refused to accompany me, I was left to the charity of this true friend, and now, when I am childless, without any rest to recruit my shattered nerves, or expended strength, I am commanded by the Duchess of Kingsland, in the most cruel and insulting terms, without even the courtesy of a line from Lord Stavordale, to return under the

the real state of the case; you will r
for you are a woman, and a kind o
submit no longer to such tyranny. I
earth should have induced me to
living child, but now," here her voic
"I can be no further comfort to hi
his dear remains under your care
leave this house and this cruel famil
they have themselves driven me to t
step I am taking, and, if their condu
against them at an earthly tribunal
registered in one above."

Turning then to her own maid:

"Under the present circumstanc
still remain with me? You have
dred, what I have said; I put

shall leave England immediately, and not return till I can do so as his legal wife. I call Heaven to witness, I, from this moment consider myself so, and thus cancel for ever the fatal bond which has united me to Lord Stavordale."

Drawing from her slender finger the wedding-ring, and placing it in Benton's hand:

"Take this to your master, and tell him truly and exactly what you have heard me say."

The man bowed low and respectfully.

"You may depend upon me, Madam."

There is a dignity in oppressed gentleness which will find its way to every heart not utterly callous.

"The affectionate nurse wept aloud, as she earnestly assured her Lady, neither bribes nor threats should ever stop her voice, or prevent her revealing the degrading scenes of cruelty

she had witnessed; and "God bless you, dear Lady, and may Mr. Cavendish be kind to you, and make you happier than in your first marriage; I shall rejoice to see you come back to England again, and I am glad Mildred will be with you, for she has a warm heart, and may be, will be a comfort to you in a foreign land. I am sure she would never think of leaving your Ladyship with no one to attend upon you, and particularly with such a journey before you."

"Indeed, indeed; yes, my Lady, I will follow you to the world's end with pleasure," said the attached maid. "I have often and often wished you could leave the Marquis, for we all saw how cruelly your Ladyship was treated."

"Thank you, my kind friends," said the now weeping Theresa, "for all your attention and affection towards me; it is something to leave some faithfulness behind: but remember, Mil—

dred, from this moment to cease calling me by my hateful title. I shall soon, I trust, have no claim to it, and from this moment I shall think and call myself Mrs. Cavendish," (looking with all a woman's confidence on her lover,) "and let us hasten, before my courage fails, for leaving all that remains of my darling boy; one last look, and I am yours entirely."

In a very few minutes, Mr. Cavendish's travelling-carriage drove to the door. Lady Stavordale's packages were removed thither from her own—the maid was already seated on the dicky—when all the servants in the house assembled in the hall to mark their respectful kindness to their departing Lady by silent bows and curtseys.

She looked a gentle adieu to them all, and, with very mingled feelings, left what had always been a home of wretchedness, to seek under a milder sky a milder fate.

Mr. Cavendish tenderly handed her into the

carriage, sprang in beside her, hastily pulled down the blinds, and, bidding the postilions drive fast, the gloomy domains of Kingsland were soon far in the distance.

END OF VOL. II.

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Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

CLARA CAMERON;

THE

BELLE OF THE SEASON.

"She was a form of life and light,
That seen, became a part of sight,
And rose, where e'er I turned mine eye,
The morning Star of Memory."—THE GIAOUR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CLARA CAMERON.

CHAPTER I.

"Who sings of sorrow, where all around
There are joy and gladness breathing;
Where the graceful form, and footsteps bound,
And young brows the rose is wreathing."

TALES OF THE MARTYRS.

WHEN Janet attended the toilette of her
y the morning after their arrival at
stham Court, there was a bustling eager-
s in her face and manner which plainly
l that she had some important news, at
st in her opinion, to communicate, if she
s only allowed an opportunity to do so.
The being Lady Eastham's attached at-

tendant even from her infancy, gave her the privilege of talking, though she was always checked in the idle gossip she was particularly fond of retailing; but this morning her features were so ominously "big with the fate of empires and of Rome," that Clara could not have the cruelty to refrain from saying,

"You look fraught with momentous news this morning, my good Janet; has any thing very wonderful occurred here since we left?"

"Yes, my lady, indeed," she eagerly replied, "I have heard strange news, and sad news, too, to my thinking; but it has not happened exactly here, although not very far off either. Somehow, I had a suspicion it would not come to good before we left London; but this is coming quick upon us, at any rate. Well, poor lady, I do think they may thank themselves for it. She has a naturally sweet temper, I am very sure; but no one can bear aggravating in

that way for ever; worry, worry—scold, scold. Mrs. Mildred told me herself she often wondered at her lady's patience—that she did."

"But, Janet," said her now really interested listener, "you forget I know nothing of what you are talking about. I recollect Mildred is the name of Lady Stavordale's maid. Does what you have heard relate to her?"

Yes, my lady, that it does. What does your ladyship think of her actually having run off with Mr. Cavendish, and being now on her way to some foreign parts? What makes it more sad is, that her poor little boy fretted so when he was told that he should never see his dear mamma again, that he took to his bed and died that very day. I assure you, my lady, it is but too true. I heard it from the under housemaid, who was told it herself by her brother, who is one of the groom-boys at Kingsland House, and he said for certain sure the young lord

died the day before yesterday, and the
to be an uncommon grand funeral
week."

"I hope and trust there is some mis
in this account," said the now anx
Clara; "do finish dressing me as quickl
possible; Sir James may have heard s
thing further."

When she went down stairs, Sir Ja
was already seated at the breakfast ta
with the London papers open before
and placing one in her hand, said,

"My dear Clara, I was just wanting
to unriddle this mysterious paragrapl
me; you know I am a bad hand at
matters. I might puzzle out the name
the horses to run for the next St. Leger
their initials; but, by Jove, to know D
B. and Marquis A. is not at all in
way."

The paragraph in question was he
with capital letters, so as to attract im
diate attention :—

"MYSTERIOUS ELOPEMENT IN HIGH LIFE."

"It is our painful duty to record one of the most distressing events which has ever been known to take place in the fashionable world, and which has plunged the illustrious house of K——d in the deepest sorrow. The Marchioness of S——e, famed for her immense wealth, and which we understand, has been singularly willed by her late father, entirely in her own power, yesterday, suddenly left her noble father-in-law's mansion in Curzon-street, where she and the Marquis resided, with the Duke and Duchess of K——d, and, it is now ascertained, is accompanied by Mr. E——t C——h, of fashionable notoriety. The fugitives were traced to the railroad station in Euston-square, but nothing further has since transpired of what has become of them. To add to the affliction of the disconsolate husband, we have further to state, that the young Lord K——d, an interesting child of three years old, was so much afflicted when he heard his mother had left home, that it caused his

death within a few hours, thus leaving the noble house of K——d without an heir. It is a singular fact, that the extreme sensibility and gentle feelings for which this ancient family are so much distinguished, should be so early developed and fatally proved as in the case of this lamented child."

"Alas! my dear Sir James," replied Clara, "these mysteries are but too intelligible, particularly as Janet has just been relating to me the same sad story. Poor Lady Stavordale is the person alluded to, and although I can believe that some fresh outrage on the part of the Kingsland family may really have driven her to elope with Mr. Cavendish, whose attentions have long been very exclusively directed that way; yet, that she has caused the death of her child, or even left him, I do not for one moment believe. I think it much more probable that she has taken him with them. But, I had hoped you might have heard something more authentic of this lamentable affair."

"No, my love," added Sir James, "I have seen no one since our return, except the grooms. I am glad to find the stud all in famous order, and there was such a glorious yell of delight when I made my appearance in the kennels, that you must go with me after breakfast to hear it. It is quite refreshing to witness such honest joy. But you look grave, my dear Clara, I dare say this story plagues you; if you like, I will gallop over to Kingsland, and learn the truth for you. But here comes good Mr. Brown, trotting on his old hack, up to the gate. We shall hear all the news now; depend upon it, he is double primed, or we should not have seen him so speedily."

This was exactly as Sir James predicted, for the worthy Doctor acted as morning post, extraordinary, to the neighbourhood, and was always the first to circulate any piece of gossip, or of scandal.

The relation he now had to give, was of course the correct one, and when his auditors heard

of the unexampled barbarity with which Lady Scavordale's feelings had been outraged, she met with kind and partial excusers of the step that she had taken; which, though never justifiable, can be certainly extenuated by circumstances, and it may even be hoped, the guilt mitigated in the sight of heaven, who seeth not as man seeth, and judgeth the motives rather than the actions.

In this unhappy instance, no impurity of heart, no lightness of the genuine character, was implicated: and let not the over rigid start, when it is even asserted, that in this individual case, the final die was cast, by as guileless and true a hand as cruelty and despair ever impelled to the dire necessity of such a venture.

Virtue, reputation, friends, station, happiness here, and eternal weal hereafter, all, all of these are risked by woman in this fearful venture,—let it not then be thought, even in these trifling pages, we would advo-

cate such a step—but, in Christian humility, we would put it to the consciences of all, whether, under such complicated circumstances of aggravated cruelty, they would themselves have trod the ordeal with a firmer step!

Clara was feelingly touched with the affecting narrative related by Mr. Brown, and, while her tears fell over the agony of the bereaved mother, she inwardly reproached herself that any repinings against her own far happier destiny should rise in her breast, and that, blessed with the kindest of husbands, her thoughts, her wishes should ever stray to bygone scenes, and now forbidden remembrances.

Firmly and determinedly did she resolve this should no longer be; and, away from the exciting cause, to act up to this resolve was easier. The fresh and exhilarating breezes of the country played on her cheek, the whole air was redolent with gladness.

"Look, only look at the clear blue sky,
Catch the playful breeze as he passes by;
Listen the chant of the wild bird's glee,
While the dancing leaves hold revelry;
In nature's whole language there's not a tone,
That's telling of sadness,—then why should our own?"

Clara's was no morbid sensibility, that delighted in imaginary sorrows. She would fain be happy when she could, and, finding Sir James was necessarily engaged with his steward for some hours that morning, she ordered her horse, and bent his steps towards a cheerful and happy scene, which always seemed to her the beau-ideal of country felicity, perhaps such as she had once imagined for herself, when the now illustrious statesman, the now fashionable and admired woman of the world, had no anticipations of futurity beyond the hallowed precincts of home, in a retired village in Devonshire.

The country round Eastham Court, or rather that immediately adjacent to the Park, was singularly romantic; the varied

surface of hill and dale was rapid and boldly marked, and altogether gave a much finer outline of character than could be found at even the further extremity of the same parish which joined St. Clair Park.

The lanes through which Clara was now riding were clothed in their richest summer foliage, and the fine trees which had remained for generations the glory of the Eastham estate, occasionally only allowed a peep of the surrounding country to appear; but, when Clara paused between two old oaks, and gazed around, she thought, even in her own native Scotland, a fairer or more striking scene had never met her eye.

Immediately beneath was a deep rocky dingle, through which flowed a transparent stream, that at one point dashed down a declivity of rock, almost amounting to a cascade. In the distance, a line of bold and grotesquely-outlined hills faded into the blue sky to the right, while to the left and

more immediately beneath her, rose the picturesque old tower of the parish church, in which direction she was riding, backed by the dark mass of the St. Clair woods.

If she turned her head to the other side of the lane, the elevated ground on which she was now riding, gave a wide expanse of flat champagne country, with no remarkable feature beyond the silvery course of the picturesque river we have before mentioned, so suddenly do we frequently find that the character of a country varies, and perhaps nowhere is this more conspicuous than in the country of which we are writing.

CHAPTER II.

"The merry homes of England,
Around their hearths by night,
What gladsome looks of household love
Meet in the ruddy light!
There woman's voice flows forth in song,
Or childhood's tale is told;
Or lips move tunefully along
Some glorious page of old."

Mrs. HEMANS.

N the sketches of character round St. ir Park, we have not yet mentioned the :gyman of the parish in which it was ıated; certainly from no disinclination attempt the delineation of one so amia- : and altogether consonant with our own :as of a *parish priest* and a *gentleman*, les which ought to go together, but, alas, frequently, do not.

The village of Greenwood answered more to what might be called a hamlet, than making any pretence to a continuous street. The cottages were built apart from each other, with some slight rustic decorations, and neat gay-looking flower-gardens, dictated by Lady St. Clair's taste. A miniature shop, "licensed to sell tea, tobacco, and snuff," and all the usual et ceteras, a small, neat public house, with its cheerful porch, covered with roses and honeysuckles,—where on a summer's evening the learned in the parish might be seen, discussing the affairs of state and their own domestic matters, over a jug of "nut-brown ale," formed all that could be called the actual village, and, in the centre of this quiet group of houses, stood the venerable church, with one of those rare round towers, now so seldom met with, and consequently so dear to the antiquarian.

On the other side of the church from St. Clair Park, opened the gate leading to the Rectory, which was the very beau-ideal of

a country parsonage. There was nothing of ostentation or display, but an elegant simplicity proclaimed it the abode of a gentleman. There were no massive stone columns to the entrance, or elaborate ironwork to mimic an approach to a park; but a plain white gate led through a field tastefully dotted with trees, to the side of the house, a perfectly unpretending structure, running out a considerable length into irregular gables; the entrance-door through a portico of hoisted oak, thickly overshadowed by the sweet-scented clematis, and some rather choice climbing plants.

The hall was fitted up, à la antique, with curious old carved oak chairs and tables collected at little expense from the neighbouring cottagers, who were well pleased to exchange these gems of former days, for the smarter looking painted furniture of the present, and the walls lined with some beautiful specimens of oak wainscot, ingeniously fitted together, and acquired piece-meal, by a similar process.

Through this, you entered into a cheerful drawing-room, plainly and cheaply furnished, but every thing arranged with taste and propriety, the only expensive articles being a fine-toned harp, and a few choice paintings. Windows down to the ground opened on a little lawn, smooth as velvet, and judiciously interspersed with flower-beds, now bright with all the hues of summer, and separated by plain light ropes, from two sloping meadows, at the foot of which flowed the same river, already described as intersecting St. Clair Park.

Three or four Alderney cows, with their deer-like delicacy of form, were decidedly ornamental, as well as useful, and being pets with all the family, would put their graceful heads through the open rope fence, and eat bread from many a little hand, whose delight it was to feed them.

A thriving shrubbery of evergreens, mixed with roses, labernums, and lilacs, separated this part of the domain from the kitchen-garden. A long trellis, forming a rustic

verandah, and covered with the most beautiful creepers, among which the deep hue of the passion-flower was now predominant, ran along the whole length of the house, shading the windows of the library and drawing-rooms from the southern sun.

Under this fragrant shelter, sitting on a low bench, was a female form of yet exquisite loveliness, although the mother of six beautiful children, who were playing on the grass before her. Her style of beauty was small and regular, while a complexion yet retaining the roses and lilies of girlhood, so rarely to be found after twenty, made her look yet younger than she really was ; and the small foot and hand told that gentle blood flowed in her veins.

The eyes were of the softest blue, and the whole expression of the features, gentle, but, animated with the purest happiness. Indeed much of the youthfulness of her appearance, was probably owing to the unruffled serenity of her placid brow, on which sorrow seemed

never to have set his seal, or to have stained that bright rose-tinted cheek with a tear.

> "While her laugh, full of life, without any control,
> But the sweet one of gracefulness, rung from her soul;
> And where it most sparkled, no glance could discover,
> In lip, cheek, or eyes, for she brighten'd all over.

Mrs. Bouverie was a younger daughter of Lord Delmaines, and a dear friend of Lady St. Clair's, before her marriage, to whom it was a very sincere gratification to be able to obtain from her lord the presentation of the living of Greenwood for Mr. Bouverie, who was thus enabled, without further delay, to lead his affianced bride to a home every way suited to her gentle tastes. It had always been her dearest wish to marry a country clergyman, to leave the enervating pleasures of a London life, for the lasting and purer joys of the country.

In meeting with Mr. Bouverie, she found all her youthful imaginings had pictured in the chosen companion of her heart. A per-

fect gentleman, alike by birth and education, his intellectual pursuits and polished tone of mind fitted him for her counsellor and guide; while his playful fancy and cheerful buoyancy of spirits, suited well with her own blithe temperament.

It would be difficult to find a happier home than Greenwood Rectory presented, and surrounded with all her favourite pursuits, Emma Bouverie never for one instant regretted the gayer scenes of her father's house in town, or the more imposing grandeur of a country mansion's old ancestral halls. Her present comparatively small domain was perfectly sufficient for all her wishes, and contained within itself a whole world of happiness.

She likewise, by no means, led a secluded life, though removed from the gayer scenes of the metropolis, and the best society of the neighbourhood was of course open to herself and Mr. Bouverie, to which their birth and education entitled them; though

their fortune might not number more hundreds than most of their associates did thousands.

But in the spring, when all the larger houses were empty, and she lost her immediate neighbours from St. Clair Park, still nothing of monotony ever preyed upon her spirits. While she and Mr. Bouverie acknowledged the advantage of living in a county famed for the excellence of its society, and which they were both calculated to adorn, still they always felt their happiness was centred in home, of which other scenes only served to heighten the zest.

Lady St Clair had considerately attended to the personal tastes of her friend, and delighting in these acts of kindness, from her own well-stored purse, added an aviary and small conservatory to the rectory, luxuries which a country clergyman could scarcely have indulged in, without this delicate care of his wife's favourite amusements, and thus, with the dear society of

ome, *ennui* never for one instant reared its ydra head within these cheerful prenets.

Thus seated there, in the scene we have tempted to describe, Emma Bouverie as waiting for her husband to join her in walk, when Lady Eastham rode up to the or. They had become cordial friends bere Clara's marriage, and still continued nstant associates.

"My dear Clara," said Mrs. Bouverie, stening to meet her friend, "this is ally very good of you, to come to me so mediately on your return. I am dehted to see you; but what have you en doing with yourself in London? you ally look quite ill; we must try, dearest, d freshen you up with our country eezes.

"I cannot say that you are very comlimentary," replied Lady Eastham, "but, believe what you say is true. I am aded and tired with all the whirl of dissi-

pation I have been in. You cannot think how refreshing it is to see this pretty quiet place again, to say nothing of your bright face, as smiling as ever; and those dear children, the very personifications of enjoyment, playing so merrily before us. I need not ask after them, I count the whole six in perfect health, and my godchild I see, able to run about with the others. I should scarce have known her, she is so much grown. Come hither Clara, and listen to all the pretty things I have brought you from London. I shall have a playfellow soon for you all to come and see. Lord Desmond is to be with us for the Kingsland races, and his little girl will be delighted with some young companions, for she has neither brother nor sister. I think I must get up a children's ball in honour of my young visitor."

"Is this Lord Desmond, the splendid orator, who makes such a conspicuous figure in the political world just now ' asked Mrs.

erie. "He is the very god of my hus-
's idolatry—he will be charmed with
pportunity of making his acquaintance
have often heard him say, there is no
c character he should so much like to
."

The very same," replied Lady Eastham,
l I think you will both like him. But
is Mr. Bouverie? In talking of the
ren, I have forgotten to inquire after the
r—but here he comes to answer for
elf, and I hope to say, 'Yes,' to my
est that you will come to-morrow, and
d a couple of days with us. You know
too soon for anything of a party, but
to us quietly just by ourselves. I
t, too, to talk over with you this sad
r of poor Lady Stavordale. Is it not
sad? I am sure, dear Emma, your
l and gentle nature will look with cha-
on the step she has taken—but how
will have this forbearance, and I dread
think of the bitter remarks and severe

censures, which I shall hear aimed at my poor friend! I must ever think her more sinned against than sinning. But no more on this subject now. I must not loiter away more time with you, for Sir James will be looking for my return, which I promised should be in time for a walk to see some improvements we are planning, before dinner. So, adieu—au revoir. You will come to us, I hope?"

Mr. and Mrs. Bouverie gladly accepted the friendly invitation to Eastham Court, and Clara cantered off on the Arab, already rejoicing in the freedom of the country, and with less weight on her spirits than she had felt for many a day.

CHAPTER III.

"Heureux de la voir, de l'entendre, de vivre avec elle dans cette douce familiarté que le séjour de la campagne autorise, il ne desiroit pas pour le moment d'autre bonheur."

CAROLINE DE LICHTFIELD.

"Now speak to me again! we loved so well.
We *loved!* Oh! still, I know that still we love!"

MRS. HEMANS.

THIS calm on Clara's spirits lasted not long; the time of the Kingsland races approached, and Lord Desmond, true to his appointment, arrived, bringing his little girl himself; though he owned not, even to his own heart, that this was undertaken as an excuse for coming a few days earlier.

The house was filled with guests, and Eastham Court rivalled St. Clair Park, as the acmé of good taste, in all its arrangements, and presented a perfect picture of aristocratic country magnificence.

The spacious mansion, the extensive park, gemmed with stately oaks, the tasteful flower-gardens, the luxurious hot-houses, and pineries, the numerous stud, the various carriages, all that fancy or modern refinement could desire, or invent, were there; but could all these create happiness? Alas, no!—witness the aching heart of the young and lovely mistress of the scene.

Now, more than in any epoch of Clara's life, would she have felt the value of a *friend* —a friend in its truest and holiest acceptation of the word. A guide, who could point with a Christian's faith and a Christian's practice, to the path she should pursue, and raise the wandering heart from earth to heaven, leading the eye to rest on that only perfect model, which was given alike for our

imitation and our salvation. A monitor, who could gently curb the violence of earthly passion, and teaching that this is not our final resting-place, comfort the wounded spirit with the promise of an eternity, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Where the turbulence of contending feelings will be hushed, and the bitterness, the instability, the nothingness, of this world's transitory hopes and fears, will be swallowed up in the mightier and all enduring bliss of a redeemed and sanctified spirit.

But such a friend as this Clara had not the advantage of possessing. Lady St. Clair, to whom alone was confided the secret of her life, was too volatile, too unthinking herself, to be able to guide her niece to that heavenly source of comfort, which is alone adequate to the wants of erring mortals.

Mr. and Mrs. Bouverie were well fitted to fill this Christian office, but the heart of the sufferer was not unveiled to them,—they saw

her only amongst the gay, the gayest of them all, amongst the lovely, the loveliest of them all, amongst the admired, the most flattered of them all. They could not pierce through the thick covering with which she so assiduously concealed the real feelings of her heart, and though at times Emma Bouverie thought the smile was too transient to be natural, still there was nothing to excite suspicion, as to the one secret of her life, nothing, which in her situation could lead to the idea, she was not the happy being she appeared.

There was a dangerous proximity in the unrestrained intercourse of the country, which Clara found more than ever fatal to her peace. In London, she and Lord Desmond were together, frequently together, but it was not the near and gentle companionship which now, in spite of all her endeavours to the contrary, would be, as it seemed, established between them.

Yet, though the tell-tale eye, the expressive tone, constantly vibrated into her heart with the consciousness, that she understood

eelings, and that hers were not disguised
him,—yet, she had hitherto succeeded
ıe endeavour, that they should never
utterance in words, and had been for-
te in avoiding every thing approaching
ı uninterrupted tête-a-tête.

ıring the gay week of the races, it was
r to accomplish this from the large
r assembled in the house and the con-
; routine of amusements either in pub-
r private. But even here a danger
d insidious to Clara's peace—she saw
et too beloved idol of her own heart—
;reat magnet of attraction to all around;
saw him sought by all—the slightest
ı of his voice attended to—every glance
s eye watched, and every opinion noted
oceeding from *the* statesman and pa-
of the day.

ren those opposed to him in politics,
red the unbending integrity of his cha-
r, the unsullied honour of his principles,
ourted his friendship as a man, even
ey could not join him as a politician.

There is something unspeakably dear to the soul of woman in seeing the admiration, in hearing the applause of others, addressed to him she loves. "*Female vanity*" is a phrase in every one's mouth, but this is a vanity so holy in its influence, so pure in its origin, that surely angels need not blush to own it.

And this flattering incense was deeply drunk of by Lady Eastham, who quaffed the charmed cup, unmindful of the dangerous tendency, and that her own deep love was riveted by the general acclaim of a nation's homage to the object of her heart's first choice.

One by one the guests dropped away from Eastham Court, but still Lord Desmond lingered on, unknowingly, hovering like the moth round the flame, which destroys while it attracts.

It was a brilliant morning in August, the dew hung in sparkling gems on the graceful acacia, which flung its fragrant boughs,

laden with silvery flowers, across the windows of Clara's sleeping apartment.

Sir James, true to his habitual early rising, was already out among his horses and his dogs, and Lady Eastham fain would flatter herself, that it was only the bright beams of the sun, and the blithe songs of the birds, which prevented any return of repose.

For awhile, she courted oblivion, as she nestled her fair cheek into its pillow of down, but it would not be—there are "thoughts which murder sleep," and she determined rather to fly them by activity.

There yet wanted several hours to the usual time of breakfast: it would only alarm Janet to summon her attendance so unusually early. She would make her own toilette, and seek the balmy and refreshing air of the morning to calm her aching brow.

As she crossed a long corridor, curiously hung with tapestry, she paused unconsciously, ere she descended the marble staircase.

All was still, and she thought, as she lingered near that one apartment, that its inmate was still locked in the arms of sleep, and all unconscious of her unquiet slumbers.

And whither should her steps tend? As she trode the soft green terraces of velvety smoothness with which the flower-garden was laid out, in unison with the style of the house, she remembered a distant summer-house, in a retired part of the grounds, which she had not visited for several weeks. It was a particular favourite of hers, perhaps, because it strongly resembled one, in her Scottish home, the haunt of her childhood, the resort of her youthful hours, where she had dwelt on the fairy fictions in which the opening mind delights, and in later years had thrilled with enthusiasm over the impassioned lays of a Byron, or a Moore. And to memory yet more dangerously dear, had they listened to the fond tale of love, and vowed an unswerving faith.

The singular likeness, both in situation

and form, of this summer-house at Eastham Court, had been a strong attraction in her eyes. It needed but a slight stretch of imagination to fancy the Mere before her, backed with a hanging wood, a part of the magnificent lake she had gazed on for so many years of her early life; and the interior of the building she had refitted up from memory of the past.

She had carefully avoided this part of the grounds since Lord Desmond had been their guest, from a kind of nameless dread of again treading with him a path and visiting a scene which must alike remind him, as herself, of the past. But now it was too early to fear meeting any one, much less him she particularly wished to avoid; she would therefore take the opportunity of seeing that some alterations she had directed in the building had been executed to her taste.

She was in the act of drawing a large twisted oak seat, which had been made by a sketch of her own from memory, into the

exact position which the one she so dearly recollected had occupied, when a rapid step, a step by her never to be mistaken, approached in a contrary direction from the path she had come.

It was too late for avoidance; in a moment, Lord Desmond was before her, and her trembling limbs sought a resting-place on the very seat, as it might seem, of bygone years. For the time, it appeared as if William Fitzgerald and Clara Cameron were restored to each other.

Halcyon days of early confidence and requited love, why bloom ye so transiently on the soul? Hours of tender endearment and sunny hope, why are ye so speedily overcast?

Lord Desmond's pale and melancholy brow flushed into a moment's glad surprise when he saw the occupant of the summer-house, and the exclamation of "Good God! Clara, you here, at this hour!" burst from his lips, unconsciously freed from the icy bonds of constrained courtesy.

It was the first time the dear familiar name of "Clara" had been addressed to her by him during their renewed intercourse, and she felt the well-known tone vibrate to her inmost soul. She endeavoured to express in words of common-place civility that the beauty of the morning had tempted her out thus early, but the accents died upon her lips, and, pressing her hands over her face, she burst into an agony of tears.

This unfortunate, this unforeseen moment, seemed to have overthrown the work of years. The restraint from her feelings was torn away, and, when he rushed to her side and clasped his arm around her, her sinking head dropped unresistingly on his shoulder, and she there wept without restraint.

In woman, tears seem a natural vent for sorrow, but in man the conflict of contending passions must be keen and overwhelming, ere this solace is allowed. It is those only who have seen the cheek of manhood thus softened, who have felt the breast of one

they loved heaving with the tumult of irrepressible anguish, that can know the force of manhood's tears.

Clara had struggled with many a contending feeling; she had well nigh sunk under many a bitter conflict, but never had she known the full force of grief till she now saw Lord Desmond's convulsive agony.

It was more than mortal strength to witness the betrayal of such heartfelt misery unmoved. Her own she might have borne, but that of him she yet so fondly, so fatally loved, was beyond her endurance, and, as she raised her head from his shoulder, and gazed on the mighty tears which rolled down his cheek, she could only faintly utter,

"Oh, William, for *my* sake, be composed, tell me, tell me, how can I comfort you?"

"Comfort me, my beloved," he replied in tender accents. "I deserve not to be comforted. Have I not wantonly lost all that man could have had most dear? But *would* you comfort me, Clara? Would you

pour the only balm into my bleeding heart it can ever know? Tell me, dearest, would you yet comfort me?"

"Would I?" answered Clara. "Can you for one instant doubt it? Be assured, I have still no wish so dear as your happiness."

"Then tell me, Clara, tell me once again, on this side the grave, that you love me still; that the impassioned tenderness of my heart yet meets its echo in yours! That you understand me, that you know my all of affection has ever been your own exclusively; that, even in the dreadful moment of relinquishing you, my heart retained no image but yours, no hope of happiness without your love. And now, dearest, loveliest, when I see you after the lapse of years, only grown more completely all that the heart of the proudest could joy to call his own, how can I see you thus, and not hourly curse the strange fatality which separated me from you! Clara, tell me that you believe all this; and more, oh! much more, tell me, I

have never been forgotten by you. Will you, will you say this? Will you comfort me?"

For several minutes, Clara replied not; perhaps she could not—perhaps she dare not trust her feelings to words. Her soul was all unnerved at the sight of the agony of the man she had loved, she, alas! still loved so fondly. But she gazed on his tearful face—she withdrew not her hand from the ardent pressure of his.

At last, she found strength to say, "William, this is not generous in you—it is not like yourself. I once never disguised my love, though Heaven alone could know its depth and its intensity. You relinquished that love, and I became the wife of another. You are that husband's friend. You know, you see, his undeviating kindness. Aid me then to forget the past, rather than renew feelings which now only can tend to the wretchedness of us both. Thus much, I may say, I do believe, William, that you

have never forgotten me—and now let us part; this meeting has always been avoided by me—seek not to renew it. You have already seen too much into my heart, and how ill I can sometimes restrain its feelings. I feel you may be trusted—now leave me. At breakfast, you shall see that I have overcome this weakness—for my sake, if you do indeed yet love me, never seek again to call it forth. God bless you! We must both forget every thought beyond friendship."

Lord Desmond bowed over her yet retained hand—for a moment, he pressed it to his lips—he lingered as if unable to tear himself away; he longed to clasp her in a last, fond, embrace; but he resisted the powerful impulse—all too much had he already indulged his feelings at the expense of hers.

He sought not again to meet her downcast eye, and, without another look, he tore himself from her presence, and retrode the path to the house.

It was long before Clara could calm her spirits sufficiently to leave the retreat of the summer-house: she seemed even as if she should shrink from the look of the work-people on her homeward path, as if her tell-tale eyes would reveal the secret of her soul.

She walked down to the margin of the Mere; she bathed her face and temples with limpid stream, and when she thought all traces of tears would be effaced she returned to her room at her usual hour for summoning Janet's assistance; and so habitual had her self-command now become, that no agitation was visible as she made her toilette for breakfast, or joined the party which yet lingered as their guests, at this most social meal of the day.

Perhaps there was an uncontrollable look of thanks to Lord Desmond, as she heard him fixing with Sir James the day of his departure, and that the period of his hitherto-prolonged visit must close.

She appreciated the motive which dictated this, and, as he met the approving and almost grateful glance of her speaking eye, he felt himself repaid for the sacrifice he was making of her society, and reproached himself for the selfishness which had made him delay his departure so long.

Sir James, in vain, earnestly pressed his stay over the following week, when a bazaar, those torments of every neighbourhood, was to be held at Kingsland, for the building of a new church in the outskirts of the parish, where Miss Brierly, and others of the pious sisterhood, thought there was an "interesting door" open for the salvation of the benighted inhabitants, who could not be expected to walk two miles to their parish church, which was never half filled.

Lady St. Clair and Lady Eastham were alike requested to hold stalls and cheat their neighbours into charity, but, when notices of the bazaar were headed with the sound-

ing intimation, that it was "*to be conducted on Christian principles, and neither raffling nor flirting allowed,*" they both laughingly declared it was too good for them, and begged to have nothing to do with it, beyond ample supply from their purses, and the promise of being liberal buyers when the eventful day arrived.

The youthful Lady Mary Desmond heard with all the artless grief of childhood, that she was so soon to leave her "dear, pretty Lady Eastham," whom she loved with all the intensity of her heart, and in vain tried to persuade her father to stay a little longer, with the assurance that "she knew kind Lady Eastham would let them do so, if he would only ask her." But Lord Desmond's resolution was unshaken. Well would it have been for Clara had it taken place earlier, but once alive to the idea, that perhaps *her* peace demanded it, he was deaf alike to the pleadings of his own heart and those of his little girl, and the third morning after

his interview in the summer-house, the travelling carriages of the Earl of Desmond were seen to pass Eastham Lodge, *en route* for London, where he pleaded urgent business called him without delay.

CHAPTER IV.

"And many a withering thought lies hid—not lost—
In smiles that least befit who wear them most."

THE CORSAIR.

"The autumn moon slept bright and still,
On fading wood and purple hill;
And sweet the sound of waves which parted
The fond, the true, the noble-hearted,
Though mingling with its current, fell
The last warm tears of love's farewell."

MRS. HEMANS.

As the summer closed, and the flowers faded, so, alas! did Lady Eastham's health and spirits alike fail her. Gradually, the beautiful symmetry of her form lost its roundness, her cheek became pale as a marble statue, and the light buoyancy of her elastic step was gone.

constant exertion which Lord Des-
ı prolonged visit called forth, taxed
dily strength too heavily, and when
the truth flashed into his own mind,
ɜ *ought* to quit the fascination of her
', he little thought how completely he
r, the wreck of what she was.
ing the time of his presence, this was
ı perceptible ; constant excitement
er up to the mark she wished. There
then no intervals of leisure, for the
ıle of life to prey, as it were, upon
She was ever alive to the fearful
: of her situation, and never for a
ıt dare she leave the avenues to her
and her feelings unguarded, or cease
reful avoidance of the possibility of
, moment's solitude with the man she
ɜ yet loved too dearly.
ınder her present circumstances, there
ime in this admission, surely it was
eatly to be palliated, if not entirely
ɜd—witness her unceasing endeavour

to eradicate this growing weakness—witness the sinking frame, which only too plainly told how great was the mental struggle within.

We have seen that, with all her endeavours to avoid the chance of a solitary meeting with Lord Desmond, her precautions had proved in vain, and she was at length thrown into the very situation she had so much dreaded ; and when, as she feared, her powers of endurance had failed her.

Since that morning, which had been fraught with feelings of the keenest anguish, and when, with Lord Desmond's presence, she lost the strong stimulus which had hitherto subsisted, calling upon all the energes of her mind for constant exertion, then, in a few weeks, the evil wrought upon her health shewed itself more plainly.

She could not but admit to herself the blank which fell upon her existence ; the present call for self-command and for exertion was removed—her mind rested as it

were in a calm, but it was one of deadly influence, a fearful blight deadened every source of enjoyment, and when she smiled, it seemed but the spectre of departed joy.

Her books, her painting, even her music, all palled upon her—her taste and genius seemed wrapped in a funeral pall, and the gloom of the grave was around her. The future seemed but a weary waste illuminated by the fitful glare of a meteor's light, which the presence of him she loved must ever fling about her, yet she dreaded the renewed struggles, the mental conflicts, which their return to London and to Lord Desmond's society must bring back to her.

Better, even the torpid indifference of the present, than this, though at times the impassioned lines of Lord Byron would rush into her mind,

"The keenest pangs the wretched find
Are rapture to the dreary void—
The leafless desert of the mind
The waste of feeling unemployed.
Who would be doomed to gaze upon

A sky without a cloud or sun?
Less hideous far the tempest's roar,
Than ne'er to brave the billows more—
Thrown, when the war of winds is o'er,
A lonely wreck on fortune's shore.
Mid sudden calm, and silent bay,
Unseen to drop by dull decay;
Better to sink beneath the shock,
Than moulder piecemeal on the rock!"

Sir James Eastham was not a nice observer of female character, and for some time the change in his once sprightly Clara, escaped his notice, and was first called forth, by her excusing herself from joining him in a distant ride, from the fear of its being more than her present strength could undertake. Then, when his observation was once excited, he saw the elasticity of her step was gone, the buoyancy of her healthful spirits had ceased, and he anxiously besought her to have the best medical advice that money could procure, to lose no time in repairing the ravages which so short a period of illness appeared to have made in her strength.

one could suspect that sorrow and
n disappointment were sapping the
ood of the young, the beloved mistress
stham Court. The physicians hinted
hing of constitutional tendency to
mption, and advised at once change
and a warmer climate.

e kind-hearted husband proposed im-
tely passing the winter in Italy, but
knew how foreign this must be to all
stes and pursuits, and, if the truth were
n, she rather dreaded a winter's *tête*
with not the most intellectual com-
n in the world, and removed from all
vn amusements.

lan struck her as far more conducive to
storation of her health and spirits, than
ter so spent, by which she should
the advantage of an entire change of
removed from all that could excite and
te her now too susceptible nerves, and
same time have the benefit of refined
ectual companionship. She proposed

many years had been that moth
[illegible] though circumstance
vented their meeting since she ha
her abode in the south of Franc
sequently she was personally u
Clara.

Lady Katherine Arundel wa
by birth, and early in life, bef
old enough to choose for hers
trothed by her parents to one e
self in nobility of blood, and pu
gious faith. Her espoused hu
finishing his education on the co
at the age of one and twenty he
turn, to claim his affianced bri
possession of his large patrimoni

Lady Katherine had been t

around his name on their return to England. From Rome, she received a packet most interesting to her heart, containing a beautiful miniature of her betrothed, smiling in all the unclouded sunniness of youth, with the fire of intellect and love kindling in his clear blue eye. It was all that a fancy of eighteen could have pourtrayed for the lover of her heart; and when Lady Katherine's likeness was sent to him in return, she only trembled lest the impression should not be equally favourable.

Days and months now passed wearily away, till the stated period of his return was to arrive, and the only solace she found in the interim, was the sedulous cultivation of every talent and accomplishment, she was told he appreciated. Thus music became her especial study, from hearing he was himself a proficient in it, and this stimulus, joined to natural taste, soon made her one of the most perfect amateur musicians of the day.

At length, the eventful week arrived in which the young Lord Castlefort was expected to arrive in England. His estates and old hereditary castle adjoined those of Lady Katherine's father; and this match was to be a union of English acres as well as of hearts and hands.

Every preparation was made on the largest scale of magnificence to receive the long-waited-for heir. Bonfires were to gleam, cannons to fire, oxen to be roasted whole, and every demonstration of country joy was in readiness for the happy announcement of his landing and progress to his paternal domain. Couriers were stationed on the line of road to give the speediest intelligence, and all was expectant revelry.

Lady Katherine was not without her own preparations, but they were of a softer character. The favourite song was practised till every tone was perfect. The choicest flowers were gathered to adorn her apartments; and last, not least to woman's heart,

the most becoming dress was carefully selected to adorn her graceful form.

This did not come under the character of *female vanity*, or if it did, under so justifiable a shape, that it showed a right delicacy of feeling rather than a fault. It is one of woman's sweetest pleasures to minister in all things to the taste of the man she loves; and what more gratifying to him—more responsive to the finer feelings of his nature—than to see the chosen of his life anxious to increase her loveliness in his sight—desirous, by every little attention to his smallest tastes, to enhance the charms of her person in his eyes. It is sometimes seen that married women lose all interest and care in the selection of their dress, and this is excused, or rather boasted of, from having weightier duties to attend to. But let such beware—a heart may be lost; and surely a husband's praise and fond admiration ought to be yet dearer than a lover's.

But why linger out a sorrowful tale?

when they bloomed the brightest
telligence of the expected bridegro
ing, was as a corpse—he had rashly
to spring into a fishing-boat, v
passing the steam-vessel in which
passenger, as she neared the la
which means he should reach his
a few moments sooner, but his ey
the distance falsely, or he overrat
muscular powers, for he fell with
impetus into the water, and, l
assistance could be given, the the
receding tide bore him back und
of the steam-packet, where he sa
no more with life!

It would be impossible to c

bodily health sank under the infliction, and for many weeks her life was in the most precarious state, and seemed to hang but on a thread. At length, the natural strength of constitution triumphed, and she was restored to her family and friends, but with feelings very different to those of only a few short weeks before.

Now, her earthly happiness was wrecked, and she looked with a kind of holy tenderness on the memory of her lost lord. She affirmed that her all of earthly love was buried in his untimely grave, that henceforth her only comfort should be the treasuring a remembrance of his virtues, and devoting herself, with all the faith of a widow, to the cherishing his memory.

It was in vain that this idea was combated by her family; her mind was completely firm, and nothing shook her fixed determination of henceforth burying herself in a cloister; and now that her earthly hopes were withered, to fix them exclusively on

Heaven, and there to look for a ré-union to the cherished idol of her early affections, the affianced, though unseen object of her youthful love. There was a sort of mystic tenderness in her feelings that suited alike the nature of her religion, and the life to which she had devoted herself.

She thus retired at the age of twenty from a world which had lost its attractions, and took the veil in a convent beautifully situated in the south of France. Her vast fortune, and extensive and powerful family connections, made her of great importance in the sisterhood among whom she entered, and joined to her private virtues and sterling worth of character, pointed her out as a fit successor to the Lady Abbess, who, ten years after Lady Katherine's admission, was called from a life of blameless purity on earth, to a yet more perfect one above.

Lady Katherine Arundel deeply felt the responsibility of the holy office, which at the early age of twenty she was thus called

upon to fill, and from henceforth the whole powers of her naturally strong and cultivated mind were fixed on the happiness, temporal as well as eternal, of her adopted children.

Clara knew that, when her mother was first attacked with that insidious disease which ultimately terminated her life, Lady Katherine Arundel had affectionately urged her to try the frequently beneficial effects of change of climate, and come to her peaceful retreat for a few months, or as long as it was either useful or agreeable.

Nothing could be easier than now to renew a correspondence with this valuable friend of her dear mother's, which never had entirely ceased, and to propose now accepting the invitation which had formerly been given to her lamented parent and herself.

Sir James was easily persuaded that this plan of perfect quiet would be yet more conducive to the restoration of Clara's health, than if he himself accompanied her

for a winter's residence abroad, and he should thus not lose a hunting season in England; although, to do him but justice, this would never have weighed with him, if he had thought his presence could have been of any service to a wife he very sincerely loved.

Lady St. Clair also saw everything to approve of in the idea. She knew that over excitement of the mental powers had more to do with Clara's present debility than bodily disease; and so complete a change of scene, so entirely removed from all fear of intrusion, and under the attentive watchfulness of an attached and judicious friend, seemed the most likely of anything to effect an amendment, if not a perfect cure, of her complaint.

Thus, Clara addressed Lady Katherine Arundel without delay, and, even sooner than she expected, received an answer which was everything she could desire: it was impossible to be couched in a kinder or more endearing manner. There was now, then,

nothing to prolong the time ere Lady Eastham left her stately home and her native land, to seek, in a foreign climate, that renovation of health and spirits which she so much required.

Of course, her faithful Janet was to be her attendant, on whose vigilant watchfulness and care every dependence could be placed, and she was to be escorted by an old and experienced travelling servant of Lord St. Clair's, who would take all trouble from her hands as to the route they were to pursue, and travelling arrangements, and lodge her safely in the convent of St. Madeleine.

At first, Lady St. Clair was anxious to accompany Clara, at least part of her journey, but her lord was threatened with a fit of the gout, when the presence of the countess was always essential to the comfort of the invalid, and the idea was relinquished, much to Clara's satisfaction, for, dearly as she loved her aunt, she felt that

perfect solitude and quiet would be the best balm to her shattered nerves.

It is not easy to quench the buoyant spirits of youth, and, though a chilling damp was now thrown over those of Clara, she indulged the hope, that time and rest, and a removal from the exciting cause of the evil, would effect, at least, a partial renovation, and restore her to the power of enjoying those sources of amusement and pleasure which might yet be open to her.

Happiness was a word she had long blotted from her vocabulary, and till Lord Desmond came, and by his presence recalled too powerfully the remembrance of bye-gone feelings, she found she could get on very tolerably without it.

Now, if any romantic and sentimental young ladies, as yet inexperienced in that most wayward of created things—the human heart—are reading these pages, they will call the character of our heroine unnatural—perhaps unfeeling—but be it remembered

she was naturally of a gay and joyous temperament, with no taste for grief which could be eluded; and too overwhelming a tide of real anguish had passed over her, to incline her to foster the interesting sorrows of a cherished disappointment and morbid sensibility. From childhood, she possessed the happy facility of looking on the bright, rather than the gloomy side of a picture, and was of a disposition more formed for the roses than the thorns of life—if the one was snatched from her, it did not necessarily follow she must choose the other; if the roses were gone, she might still avoid the thorns. She would seek less dangerous flowers to strew her road through life, and many of brilliant hues and fragrant sweetness might yet bloom on a pathway which many would pronounce desolate and dreary, making no effort to enliven, or to adorn it.

CHAPTER V.

"Go with speed
To some forlorn and naked hermitage,
Remote from all the pleasures of the world;
There stay until the twelve celestial signs
Have brought about their annual reckoning.—
If this austere and unsociable life—
If frosts and fasts, hard lodging and thin weeds
Nip not the gaudy blossoms of your love."

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

KIND and affectionate were Sir James' parting adieux to his wife, as with tender solicitude, he handed her into the luxurious travelling-carriage, arranged with every comfort which could promote her ease on her journey. The faithful Janet was seated by her side, and her husband's last words, true to his character, were—

"Mind you take great care of yourself, Clara, and depend upon it, I'll have Arab in excellent order for your rides when you come back; though it's not so much in my way, I will have an eye to your green-houses and flower garden, too."

As this is not intended for a travelling guide book, it need merely be mentioned, that Lady Eastham's progress, both by sea and land, was rapid and prosperous, and the novelty of the scene, joined to the composure of her feelings, with nothing to excite, and much to amuse, had restored something of animation to her countenance, when she arrived within sight of her destined place of abode.

The convent of St. Madeline was beautifully situated on the banks of the Garonne; the site commanding a delightful view, stretching along the country which surrounded each side of the river, and at an earlier period of the year gay with luxuriant woods, and vines, and plantations of

olive. Towards the south, the view was bounded by the majestic Pyrenees, whose summits, sometimes half hid in clouds, and sometimes rearing their bold and grotesque outline to the sight, as the vapours rolled away from their summit, presented an ever-varying scene of picturesque grandeur. In parts, they appeared almost barren, and in others dark with the gloomy foliage of the pine, now varied by the brilliant tints of autumn, which in these southern regions had not yet given place to winter. The tremendous abruptness of the precipices was contrasted by the gentle slope of the pastures and woods below, affording a pleasing relief to the eye by the cheerfulness of their peaceful cottages, and numerous flocks and herds, after having traversed the snow-capped summits of the mountains.

As the carriage entered upon the forest, which bounded the domain of the convent, Clara's eyes caught between the trees of the

chestnut avenue, now nearly stripped of their leaves, the turretted corner of what was once a splendid chateau, the abode of magnificence and revelry, now the resting-place of a sisterhood devoted to religion, and separated from the world, its turmoils and its gaieties. Every feature of the building, distinguished by an air of heavy grandeur, could now be distinctly seen—the broad turret, the arched gateway, that led into the court, the drawbridge, and the dry fosse which surrounded the whole.

Clara alighted at the great gate, from which she was led into a gothic hall, now no longer hung with the banners and armour of its former warlike possessors, but with pictures and images of the saints, among which, the holy patroness, St. Madeline, held a conspicuous place.

Lady Eastham was received in the great parlour of the convent by Lady Katherine Arundel, who, if she had now assumed something of the cold solemnity of the

Abbess, it was so softened by the natural grace and refinement of high breeding which imparts an indescribable polish to the manners, that Clara felt at once she was in the company of one used to the same grade of aristocratic society as her own, and was instantly at ease with her hostess.

Lady Katherine Arundel's manner possessed also something dearer than the mere *bienséance* of refinement, for it was genuinely kind-hearted and affectionate, mixing in her cordial welcome of her young friend much of the gentle tenderness of the mother; and, during the whole of Clara's sojourn under her roof, she always found her the same, and if in her bearing to the sisterhood there was necessarily perhaps somewhat of the austerity of *superieur* of such an establishment, it still retained the native elegance and kindliness of the woman.

The young invalid was anxiously led into the cheerful suite of rooms prepared for herself and her maid, and advised to

rest from the fatigue of the journey before she joined the evening meal, when one of the nuns should be sent to show her the way to the refectory, or, if more agreeable, she should be served in her own apartments, though the abbess made a point of always joining the simple meals of the whole establishment, of which the hours were early and regular.

When Janet saw the scrupulous attention to comfort displayed in all the arrangements of the rooms allotted to herself and her lady, even her prejudices gave way, and she began to think a convent was a much more cheerful-looking place than she expected. But, when she afterwards saw the bare walls of the cells devoted to the nuns, with no furniture beyond a chair, a table, and a crucifix, she again changed her opinion, and said she would not live there for the world; that though hers and her lady's rooms were comfortable, and fitted up in a Christian-like way, the others put

her more in mind of Sir James's dog-kennels than anything else.

It was against the rules of the convent for the sisterhood to walk beyond their own grounds, but Lady Eastham was at perfect liberty to follow her own taste for rambling, and the daily walks she took, accompanied by Janet, served both as an amusement to her mind, and as salutary to her health. She had been accustomed from childhood to regular exercise, and had never given up the practice even in the busiest vortex of fashionable dissipation. Thus she soon regained the power of longer walks than she had lately ventured upon, and, as she breathed the fresh pure breeze from the mountains, she was reminded of her native air, blended into a more southern softness.

She loved to explore the wildest recesses of that retired district, and with nothing beyond a peasant's cottage for miles around, she could feel her rambles were in perfect safety. Frequently, too, there was added

the stimulus of doing good, and as her well-stocked purse increased the comforts of the neighbouring peasantry, she gradually gained the appellation of "La bonne et belle Anglaise."

Her love of music she also found a great source of enjoyment, and her taste for this delightful science had ample scope in the beautiful and cultivated voices of some of the nuns, and in the instrumental performances of others, which, though restrained within the limits of sacred harmony, there found a large field both for science and natural taste. Clara had never so fully appreciated the fine airs of Handel and Mozart, to which Lady Katherine was particularly partial, than when the fine-toned organ in the chapel led the full choir of voices, or when, for their evening's relaxation, some of the sisters sang to the accompaniment of the harp, or piano. In these musical soirées Clara's sweet and finely-cultivated voice often blended in sacred harmony, and as she listened to the yet beautiful tones of

perfect melody which issued from Lady Katherine's lips, as she marked the correct line of her profile, and the majestic contour of figure which her flowing robes could not conceal, the tears would start to her eyes as she thought,

> "Lost to the world by lot severe,
> Oh! what a gem lies buried here,
> Nipp'd by misfortune's cruel frost,
> The buds of fair affection lost!"

And, should she mourn over her own destiny, even to the ruin of her bodily health, when she saw the meek submission, the cheerful resignation of this gifted friend? Should she not rather seek to emulate her example, and in meek submission to the will of her heavenly Father to say, "not my will, but thine be done?"

Lady Katherine was no stern and bigoted abbess, who ruled her cloister with an iron rod, or who thought all the embellishments and softer graces of life, must of necessity

be excluded from a heart devoted to its Creator. She rather sought by the innocent relaxations of music, painting, and elegant literature, to enliven the austerities of the cloister, which under her gentle sway ceased to be gloomy, and only offered a calm and secluded path to that Heaven, whose service this holy sisterhood had embraced, from choice, not compulsion, and exhibited a beautiful specimen of the cheerful character of Christianity, blended with its austere tenets.

It was impossible any situation could have been found more calculated to ease the throbbings of a wounded heart, or soothe the sorrows of disappointment. Lady Katherine was a *Christian*, and a Christian in the best acceptation of the name—she had turned from the griefs of early misfortune, to dedicate her time, her talents, herself, to the service of her God and Saviour.

By no means bigoted to the peculiar dogmas of her own creed, she only talked to

heaven than the offering of a cheerful and happy heart. But I would tell you this, that should disappointment or any secret grief, mingle in the cup of life, that there is only one source which can mitigate its bitterness, and that is, a firm and unflinching trust in the merciful superintendence of a higher Power, who orders all things for the best to those who love him. Believe me, my dear Clara, you will find that religion will never lessen your joys, and can alone soothe your sorrows."

Thus, in strains of cheerful piety, would the excellent abbess instruct the beloved child of her old friend in the beautiful doctrines of Christianity, and lead her mind to the study of its divine truths. For the first time, Clara saw the only true source of strength, and the weakness of her own resolves was aided by a power, hitherto unsought for, and unknown. Gradually her mind became calmer, and, guided by religion's gentle voice, she was taught to bow with

Clara of those consolatory truths, which are open alike to Protestant and Catholic, of that heavenly Saviour who came to save *all*, who are willing to turn to him, and live.

She bade her look upon this world as a state of probation to a better, and whether her course was strewed with roses, or overspread with thorns, alike to consider it but as a passage to a more enduring inheritance, and that all is ordered for the best by that heavenly father, "who doeth all things well."

"I do not tell you, my dear child," would she say in her soft persuasive voice, "not to enjoy the blessings which a benignant Providence has poured upon you—if youth, rank, wealth, and happiness are your lot—a tender husband and affectionate friends—all that can seem desirable in this world,—oh think not, dearest, I would bid you not enjoy all these blessings, for be assured that no more acceptable incense can rise to

heaven than the offering of a cheerful and happy heart. But I would tell you this, that should disappointment or any secret grief, mingle in the cup of life, that there is only one source which can mitigate its bitterness, and that is, a firm and unflinching trust in the merciful superintendence of a higher Power, who orders all things for the best to those who love him. Believe me, my dear Clara, you will find that religion will never lessen your joys, and can alone soothe your sorrows."

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submission and contentment to the extinction of her once-cherished hopes of happiness, and to seek repose in the fulfilment of her duties and the many blessings yet showered upon her.

Lady Katherine's experienced eye had not failed to detect that some lurking grief was preying on the health and spirits of her young friend, and with almost a mother's tenderness, she turned all the energies of her powerful mind to find a remedy, without betraying to the sufferer that her secret malady had been discovered even by the watchful anxiety of friendship.

And what remedy equally efficacious could be found, as again turning to the ennobling as well as consolatory precepts of Christianity, what could so effectually restore the healthy tone of energetic exertion to the drooping spirits, as to point out a true motive for action, a right object in pursuit?

In this, Lady Katherine could see Clara

was lamentably deficient, and in leading her talents and her powers to a higher end than human applause and fleeting amusement, she hoped to give stability to her mind, and firmness to her resolves.

No doubt, right motives are sometimes suspected, and often not duly appreciated, but there are times when we must have felt the necessity of a higher rule than that dictated by the world, a more enduring reward than any it can offer. The right object of our lives, the doing the will of our heavenly Father, and promoting his glory, will be found alike a blessing in sorrow and in joy—it soothes the bitterness of the one, and ennobles and secures the other. The soul is thus freed from every selfish thought, and, being nerved and steeled against the entrance of every base desire, it is led along the rugged yet not fearful road of duty, of self-denial and self-sacrifice, till it is brought to a nearer resemblance to its Creator.

If there are any truths concerning our-

selves which the thoughtful heart sees written legibly on everything around us, they are these: that we were born for a great purpose, beyond the mere temporary concerns of this life; and that, for its entire and worthy fulfilment, the utmost exertion of all the wonderful faculties with which we are endowed is required. We thus see that, through all the vicissitudes of life, we have at once a guide and a motive for our actions, a sanctifying purpose to influence and to lead us on in the path of duty, and at the same time making it one "of pleasantness and peace."

Even for our own happiness, what can be so desirable as to have a worthy object, to which, and by which, to direct and guide ourselves? If we really feel that we need such an object, what is there that can so much cheer, and animate, and strengthen the heart in all the varied and chequered scenes of life, in the disappointment of our own personal hopes and the loss of our own

affections, as the bright unfading prospect of a holy and blessed object of desire and interest, which can be blasted by no disappointment, and which triumphs over change and time, and death? And, on the other hand, if our path in life is bright and smiling, our best and purest affections satisfied, and all the tender ties of home unbroken around us, here too, a sanctifying purpose must influence us; here, too, an ennobling motive must guide us, for without the prospect of re-union beyond the grave, our happiness would lose its stability, without a purpose, strengthening us in duty, the social relations of life, however sacred and binding, might cease to be held inviolate.

With lessons such as these, drawn from the purest code of Christian morality, did the Abbess of St. Madeline strive to strengthen the principles and thus to fortify the heart of her beloved young charge; and to precept was added example, for the whole tenor of her own life was in accordance with the senti-

ments of elevated and rational piety, with which she so anxiously desired to imbue Clara's mind.

This heavenly motive for action had been her own solace in adversity, and now shed that cheerful influence over her life and character, which elevated her above this mortal scene, and at the same time taught her to fulfil its various duties. She was fondly beloved by her adopted daughters, who, while they respected the unsullied purity of her character, and bowed implicitly to all her commands, also never hesitated to unbosom their griefs to her sympathizing affection, and thence to seek both solace and advice.

CHAPTER VI.

"——————————I come
To this sweet place for quiet. Every tree,
And bush, and flagrant flower, and hilly path,
And thymy mound that flings unto the winds
Its morning incense, is my friend."

BARRY CORNWALL.

"In the green sunny vales, with me, thy spirit
would but pine,
And yet I will be thine, my love! and yet
I will be thine."

MRS. HEMANS.

IMPERCEPTIBLY time passed on with Clara, and winter was regularly established even in those southern regions, before she had thought of its approach. So gradually had the cold increased, that she had never found it necessary to remit her daily walks, and still

persevered in her wanderings to the cabins which were scattered at intervals along the banks of the Garonne, and in the sheltered valleys which lay at the foot of the Pyrenees.

One clear bright morning Clara, attended by Janet, was tempted by the invigorating sunshine to pursue the path of a woodland glen, farther than she had yet advanced, and was amply repaid by the beauty of the scene which awaited her. The vivid green of the myrtle and arbutus which grew in rich luxuriance, took off from the barren aspect of winter, and lent a sunniness to the landscape delightful to the eye.

At the entrance to this glen of ever-greens, as it might well be called, several shepherds' huts were built, and the children were playing in the little gardens which surrounded their dwellings with all the noisy mirth of their age, when an interesting young woman came from one of the doors, and hushed them into silence by reminding them, that their jovial voices might reach to " La Chaumière

CHAPTER VI.

"————————————I come
To this sweet place for quiet. Every tree,
And bush, and flagrant flower, and hilly path,
And thymy mound that flings unto the winds
Its morning incense, is my friend."

BARRY CORNWALL.

"In the green sunny vales, with me, thy spirit
would but pine,
And yet I will be thine, my love! and yet
I will be thine."

MRS. HEMANS.

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Anglaise," where "their sweet and gentle friend" was now languishing on a bed of sickness.

Clara's ear eagerly caught the term Anglaise, and she demanded of the young peasant, why she had used that appellation. This was explained by her informing her that this cottage had been built many years since by an English gentleman, who had spent a summer there in exploring the beauties of the surrounding scenery, and that since then it had generally been let to tourists during the summer months, but that this year a gentleman and his wife had resided there for a longer period than usual for its flitting occupants, and that now their departure was retarded by the sudden illness of the young lady, who had always been so kind to the children of the little valley, and particularly to the narrator's youngest little one, that they were all anxious to spare her any annoyance, and to prevent any noise from disturbing her.

Clara's interest was heightened when she learned these strangers were English, and she instantly determined that in their isolated situation, les usages du monde might well be dispensed with, and without introduction she would immediately call, and offer any assistance in her power.

The path to "La Chaumière Anglaise" was easily pointed out, and peeping among the luxuriant myrtles which surrounded it, though the roses which twined round its walls were bereft of their leaves, it still had an air of cheerfulness and beauty. It was built in the English style of a cottage ornée, and an adjoining little conservatory, glowing with all the tints of summer, showed that its inhabitants were neither devoid of taste, nor of the means of gratifying it.

Clara stood under a fanciful porch as she rang the bell of a glass door, which opened into a small hall, through which a door stood open into an apartment, where Clara was immediately struck by its being fur-

nished with all the elegancies of modern refinement, while a harp and guitar, with a painter's easel, told that the fine arts were not neglected.

The length of time which followed before the ring of the bell was answered, told that callers were an unwonted occurrence, but at length a man servant, in appearance an English valet, approached with gentle steps across the hall and opened the door, with evidently every precaution to prevent its noise being heard.

He immediately started with surprise at the sight of Lady Eastham, and begged her ladyship's pardon for keeping her so long waiting, but his lady was dangerously ill, and the slightest noise forbidden. Clara also felt bewildered, though she could not account for the remembrances which the man's countenance recalled. But her doubts were speedily dispelled by Janet exclaiming in the broad Scotch which always escaped her when taken by surprise—

"Hegh, gude guide us, sirs, who would have thought of seeing you, Mr. Byfield, in this outlandish place? Why, my lady, this is Mr. Ernest Cavendish's own gentleman, and depend upon it the poor sick lady must be Lady Stavordale."

With the well-bred courtliness of his station to one of Clara's rank in life, he begged she would not stand in the cold, but just step into the parlour while he informed his master she was there—that is, if she would not object to enter—seeming to remember the ban of the many was now reared against their door. But Clara was too genuinely kind-hearted, too innately pure herself, to hesitate for a moment as to what course she should pursue. She remembered only that the unfortunate victim of home tyranny had been her friend, and that she was now in distress and illness—glady would she minister all in her power to the alleviation of her sufferings, whether mental or bodily, and that there must be

much of the former, under the most favourable circumstances, there cannot exist a female heart infatuated enough to doubt, even at the moment when she braves it all.

The attentive servant stirred up the embers of a neglected fire as he drew a fauteuil towards it for Clara to seat herself; and, inviting his old acquaintance Janet to follow him into Mrs. Mildred's room, the door was closed, and Lady Eastham left to her own reflections.

These could not but be painful in the extreme. There was much to call forth sad and foreboding ideas. The small apartment in which she sate, though furnished with luxurious ease, as far as its dimensions allowed, made a strong contrast to the splendid state in which she had always previously beheld the poor Theresa. There was her music-book open at the last song she had dwelt upon, and Clara remembered it as an old favourite of Ernest Cavendish's. There was some trifling female fancy-work

lying on the table, and a vase filled with now withering flowers. All told a tale of the change a very short period must have made in her to whom these belonged, who must so lately have been here, and now was stretched on the bed of dangerous illness.

She had time for deep musing on the train of thought thus awakened, before it was broken in upon by the gentle unclosing of the door, and the entrance of Ernest Cavendish.

It would have been difficult to have pictured a more striking change than either the last few days of anxiety, or the more protracted period of months of a different species of suffering, had wrought in the appearance of the once gay man of the world. The fire of his dark eye was fled—the fierté of his distinguished manner was softened into repose—the firmness of his step was gone—his dress, formerly so recherché, was careless and neglected.

At this altered spectacle, Clara rose to

greet him with more friendliness of feeling than she had ever before experienced; and, as he took her extended hand, she almost fancied a tear stood in his eye.

This is indeed kind of you, Lady Eastham, like yourself—who else would have come to us in our present degradation? I cannot but hope the pleasurable surprise may act beneficially on my poor Theresa. But how, in God's name, have you found us out? I cannot express my astonishment when Byfield whispered in my ear you were below. We have lived so retired in this secluded spot, and so completely, as I conceived, incognito, that I cannot imagine by what means you discovered any traces of us.

Clara shortly explained that nothing was less sought for her on her part, whose surprise at this meeting equalled his own, and briefly related how and wherefore she was an inmate at the convent of St. Madeline.

For an instant, he appeared to writhe under her simple statement, that this inter-

view had been unintentional, the jealousy which the many slights they had received, rendered him painfully sensitive as to any insult offered to his suffering companion, but he appeared speedily to check himself for the injustice of his suspicions, and with open candour spoke to Clara of the wretchedness of their situation, even before this sudden and appalling illness of Theresa, seemed a death-blow to his hopes.

He informed her that immediately on leaving England they had gone to Naples, but this was too much the resort of the English to answer their purpose. At first, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Cavendish received at least general civility in the public resorts of amusement which they attended: they avoided any private acquaintance, and hoped to pass unnoticed among the host of strangers who flocked to this delightful city. But their elopement had made too much noise in England to be long in reaching a place so thickly populated with its in-

habitants, and, before many weeks were over, Ernest Cavendish found himself and his unfortunate companion, general objects of avoidance.

In vain they tried by yet more determined seclusion to avoid the mortifications which assailed them on every hand, but except they literally imprisoned themselves within the grounds of their beautiful villa, they found it was impossible to be free from the gaze of scorn, or the withering look of avoidance which every where awaited them. At last, as if to put the finishing stroke to their degradation, they one evening met a large English party exploring the picturesque ruins of a dilapidated monastery in the neighbourhood. Theresa was quietly seated on a moss-grown stone, sketching a falling archway in the foreground, with the splendid bay in the distance, when the loud laugh of well-known voices met her ear. At first, she only recognised them as English, but the next moment brought before her eyes the

Countess of Lancaster, with her daughters, the Ladies Plantagenet, surrounded by a bevy of gentlemen, and flirting in a more undisguised manner than they dared to indulge in at home.

We have before seen somewhat into the character of this aristocratic dame, and therefore shall not wonder that she particularly shrank from anything approaching towards contamination for herself or her daughters. They had been particularly assiduous in their attentions formerly to Lady Stavordale, but now the case was altered, and with the ill-breeding, which unfortunately is not confined to station, but which is sometimes as conspicuous in a duchess as in a chimney-sweeper, they rudely gazed on the poor Theresa, and, with no recognition beyond a supercilious toss of the head, and then an abrupt turning of the back to where she was seated, they were heard in an affectedly suppressed tone to exclaim against the terrible annoyance of

being exposed to meet *such people*, that it really was one great objection to being abroad; that those who dare not show their faces in England, here felt no shame in doing so.

These unfeeling remarks, and insolent behaviour, had left the poor victim to whom they were addressed drowned in tears, and when Ernest Cavendish joined her from the other side of the ruins, where he had only gone to seek another good point of view for her pencil, she could only faintly entreat him to take her away from that odious place, and beyond the reach of any of the soi-disant friends of her prosperity. They had then travelled through Switzerland, and at length had settled themselves in the secluded, but beautiful spot in which Clara had discovered them.

But this was a life ill-suited to the previous tastes and habits of Ernest Cavendish, and a thousand times would he curse the folly which had induced him to place him-

self in such a position, removed from all he had ever thought desirable in life, and becoming a hermit rather than a man of the world.

Then again his better feelings would prevail, as he looked on the gentle being at his side, who breathed but in his love, and whose very existence seemed to hang upon his tenderness. Here she experienced more happiness than had ever previously been her lot. Surrounded by the rich scenery of nature, her woman's heart was satisfied with the all-sufficiency of love, and unminded by any galling mixture with the world, of the peculiarity of her unfortunate situation, she almost lost the remembrance of not being the, as yet, legally wedded wife of her lover. At times, a shade would pass over her brow, as she gazed on the manly, and in her eyes perfect, form before her, and knew that for her he was burying the mid-day of his life in obscurity, and she sometimes feared was pining under the monotony of a scene,

which to her only offered a continuance of the sweetest delights.

From this tranquil state of feeling and of action, she was roused to encounter the turbulent sea of doubt and suspense. English newspapers informed them that the trial necessarily following her elopement from the tyranny of Lord Stavordale was coming on, and she watched with intense anxiety for the verdict of her countrymen, and the consequent divorce which she so ardently desired to release her from a chain of slavery, and to enable him, whom she now considered as her husband, legally to become so.

It was in this state of nervous susceptibility, which renders the bodily frame doubly awake to any exciting cause of disease, that she accidentally took shelter from a heavy torrent of rain, in a peasant's hut, where the children were just recovering from the scarlet fever. At the time, no notice was taken of the untoward chance, but when she

suddenly sickened with every symptom of violent illness, there could be no doubt of its origin. The best physicians were called in from the neighbouring town, and two were now awaiting the crisis of the disorder, in the house!

After the detail of these painful circumstances, Mr. Cavendish begged Lady Eastham would stay over this anxious period, at least under the same roof with her poor friend; and, as she had no fear of infection, from having herself had the malady when a child, she would then, on the result being favourable, cheer her with an interview, he would for ever bless her kindness.

Clara could not think of refusing such a request at such a moment, particularly after listening with heartfelt interest to the account she had received of the various distressing scenes they had been subject to, and which, she suspected, might have been more keenly felt by Theresa than she would allow to appear to him, who was, in fact, the cause of them.

She therefore assured Mr. Cavendish of her ready acquiescence in his desire, and, requesting him to return to the sick-bed of the sufferer, and summon her when she might appear, she sent for Janet to commission her to return to the convent, lest the abbess should be uneasy at her prolonged absence, which she was to explain by the fact of having accidentally met with some English friends, and to come back in the afternoon, before it grew dark, to accompany her walk homewards.

CHAPTER VII.

"The flower, the leaf, o'erwhelmed by winter's snow,
Shall spring again, when beams and showers return,
The faded cheek again with health may glow,
And the dim eye with health's warm radiance burn;
But the pure freshness of the mind's young bloom,
Once lost, revives alone in worlds beyond the tomb."

MRS. HEMANS.

Two long hours were spent by Clara in anxious suspense, only broken in upon by a message from Mr. Cavendish, when a servant brought in a tray of refreshments, informing her that he trusted all was going on well.

At length the door again opened, and Clara gladly hailed a very different expression on

the countenance of Ernest Cavendish to that she had first seen imprinted there.

The brightness of former days was still unseen, but yet there was hope, and almost cheerfulness.

"Thank God, my dear Lady Eastham," he said, as he took her hand, "your kindness in staying has been rewarded, and my poor Theresa is again conscious of what is passing around. I shall never forget the sweet expression of her face as she opened her eyes, and recognised me sitting beside her. At first, the gaze was long and almost vacant, till, with a glad assurance of certainty, she gently murmured, 'You are indeed with me, my love; I have had dreadful dreams. I fancied I was torn from you —that they were all screeching round me. Oh! that fearful voice; never let me hear it again! Dearest, speak to me in your own kind tones.' I need not tell you how fondly I re-assured the dear sufferer, and when the physicians thought the pleasurable feelings

of your unexpected presence might prove beneficial, I cannot tell you how the fire of joy again kindled in her dark eye.

"'My dear, dear Clara, is *she* come to see me? How like herself to do this, when every one but you, Ernest, leaves me! Oh! let me see her, the presence of the good and the pure will cast a hallowed shade around me; the unnatural glare of fever will leave me. Bring her to me!'"

Lady Eastham rose with a beating heart to seek her friend, but she was too well used to conceal its throbbings to allow anything of excitement, or emotion, to appear in her manner, which might be injurious to the invalid.

Theresa's illness had been of too short a duration to leave the deep marks of suffering on her features. It was true the danger had been extreme, and could not now be called over; but it was of a nature to prostrate the strength, rather than to impair the external appearance. The flush of fever had

passed away, and, as Clara entered the sick room, she was inexpressibly relieved at the slight alteration which appeared in the countenance of her friend, as she attempted to stretch out her hand to greet her. But then the fearful struggle of nature against fever (which had been going on during the last few days) displayed itself in the total prostration of strength it had occasioned, and the feeble hand sank powerless beside her.

As Clara stooped to impress the kiss of friendship on her cheek, an involuntary tear escaped from her controul, and did not pass unnoticed by the invalid.

"My sweet friend," she softly whispered, "weep not for me. Now you are come, I have all my heart can desire—love and friendship! What could woman's heart ask more?"

In after-years of pining weariness, how often would the remembrance of that blessed hour come back over her soul, and seem to

bring some of its bloom to the darkness and monotony of her existence! When the brightness of love had sunk beneath the hand of time, and the faith of man's heart had been quenched by the dull solitude, which his own home only offered to him. When he would leave the partner of his guilt to pine in weary loneliness, and seek himself the relaxation of that brilliant society which the usages of the world, alas, allowed to re-open for him, but never, or very scantily, to the fallen virtue of woman.

Happy for us that the future is unknown! else, had poor Theresa's vision glanced through the dark vista of coming years, how different would have been her feelings to those of confiding happiness which now soothed her yet aching temples!

After as long an interview as was thought advisable for the weakness of the convalescent, Clara returned to the convent, with the promise of renewing her visit on the morrow. The kind abbess listened with

sincere interest to the relation given by her young friend of the unexpected rencontre of the morning, and, far from blaming her for yielding the solace of her presence, at such a time, and in such circumstances, she praised the generous candour, which, relying on its purity of motive, could dare to do what the dictates of her own heart told her were right, without adverting to the selfish principle of merely what the world would say of such a step.

"Yet think not, my child," she added, "that I would wish you to set the opinion of others at defiance: this would be a dangerous doctrine for any, but yet more for woman, who must always, more or less, be guided by the generally received laws of propriety and decorum, but there is a servile following of this principle, and an observance of its spirit, which allow of a wider sphere of action. It would be unbecoming your station and influence in society to consort with those beneath you

either in education or morals, but when an erring fellow mortal requires your sympathy, then do not hesitate to swerve from the rigid line of the censorious, but willingly lend your aid, when by so doing, you neither sanction vice, nor lower the standard of virtue."

Acting up to these generous and Christian sentiments, every day found Clara by the sick couch of the invalid, and the consciousness of doing good, added vigour, and a legitimate source of enjoyment to her own mind, while it greatly accelerated the recovery of her friend. The result of the trial instituted by Lord Stavordale, had been waited for with intense interest by them all, and even Clara, who had only a friendly interest in the event, could scarcely control her agitation, when Ernest Cavendish placed the long wished-for paper before her, with the fiat of an English jury.

"It is all we could desire," were his only words, as placing the interesting account in

her hands, he left her to its undisturbed perusal. The most distinguished counsel of the day were employed by the family of Kingsland, assisted with every distortion of paid evidence, to blacken the delinquency of the unfortunate wife, and ensure heavy damages as a recompense to the husband. The trial was one which awakened more than general interest, from the rank in life of the parties, and the noise it had made in fashionable life. The court was crowded almost to suffocation when the senior counsel rose, and in an elaborately-studied speech assured the jury that it had never been his painful duty to bring a case before their notice, which possessed so little of an extenuating character. The parties were, as they knew, in the highest grade of aristocratic society, the family of the injured husband being on both the father's and mother's side, one of the most distinguished in the land. Nor were they distinguished only for a long line of illustrious

ancestors, but for the purity of their morals, and the upright integrity of their conduct. The unfortunate subject of this suit could not plead that her inexperienced youth had been left unassisted and unguided by either her husband, or his noble family.

By a unity of family affection almost unparalleled, the Marquis and his young wife had continued to live under the paternal roof ever since his marriage, and it would be proved in evidence that the estimable Duchess of Kingsland had, with an interest truly maternal, constantly watched over the conduct and assimilated herself and her amiable and accomplished daughters with all the pursuits and amusements of their young inmate. Thus no excuse of neglect, or being left to her own inexperience could be brought forward as a palliation for the strange infatuation which could lead to the abandonment of a home, rich in all the gentle charities of life, while it was graced with all that could elevate and adorn it.

There was, however, a yet stronger proof of the strength of that unfortunate influence which had been obtained over her mind, when he brought to view a fact, repugnant to human nature, that this elopement from the fond arms of her husband, and the sanctuary of his noble father's home, had been at the time of the dangerous illness of her child, the heir of this illustrious house, and the very day preceding his death. That when the lacerated bosom of the bereaved parent would turn to his wife and the mother of his lost one for consolation, he would find that she had fled, even in that hour of anguish, far from the house of mourning, with the unprincipled seducer of her innocence. With this startling fact, he closed a long and impassioned appeal to the feelings of the jury as husbands and fathers. The Duchess of Kingsland, and several domestics and retainers of the family were brought up as evidence.

The impression which this wily address,

in which the real truth of the case was so ingeniously perverted, was strongly in favour of the injured husband; and when the counsel for the defence—a young man, as yet unknown to legal fame—rose, in reply, a murmur of dissatisfaction was heard in the court, and he commenced his speech with the general tide of opinion set strong against him.

His manner was energetic and forcible, but with none of the forensic style of hyperbole for which his learned opponent was famed. He commenced by simply stating to the jury that he had been instructed by his client to make no defence, or to lengthen out an investigation which must be deeply painful to the feelings of her, he was now bound by every tie of honour and affection to protect. But, when he heard the gross misrepresentations of facts, he would not call them wilful falsehoods of his learned friend—when he heard the garbled evidence which had been brought forward—all tend-

ing so fearfully to create an erroneous impression against the interest, and what to them was far dearer, the character of those for whom he appeared—he could not refrain from bringing their own proofs against them, or condemning them from the mouths of their own witnesses. He came prepared with no other, or as he had already stated to the jury, with any intention of defence, till the mis-statements he had heard wrung one from him.

He then, in an ingenious cross-examination of the Duchess of Kingsland and her subordinate agents, elicited the appalling facts, that from her very marriage the young Marchioness had been subjected to the strictest and most degrading espionage; that she was allowed no freedom of opinion nor action, even as regarded her own child; that she had ever seemed fond of it, even to a weakness; that the nurses had frequently seen her in tears, from the reproachful sarcasms of the Duchess; "that she was

never happy but in the nursery;" that she was invariably treated with the most unmerited harshness and indignity, not merely by her husband, but by all his family, and never allowed to follow her own inclination in anything; that so far from abandoning the sick-bed of her child, it was to seek that dying couch, against the commands of her tyrannical lord, that she had left their home in Curzon-street, to rejoin her darling boy at their country-seat, and Mr. Ernest Cavendish accompanying her was an unforeseen and unfortunate coincidence, the consequences of which laid her more open to pity than to blame; that while she was weeping at the death-bed of her child, she received the harsh and unfeeling commands of her husband, yet more insultingly conveyed through the medium of his mother, and through the hands of a mere tool of their own, to return immediately to London; and, in despair at this last outrage, with every tie which was dear to her in the cruel family of Kingsland

now severed by death—could any one be surprised at the rash, but utterly unpremeditated step which threw her on the only protection within her reach, the watchful and tender solicitude of Mr. Ernest Cavendish?

This was the outline of a case laid without previous study before the judgment of an English jury, and borne out as it was, in all its dark outline, by no witnesses but their own, he fearlessly left his client's cause in their hands, trusting their verdict would express the view which ought to be taken of the plaintiff's unmanly misrepresentation of facts, and of the long train of domestic tyranny, which extenuated, as much as such an unfortunate error could be extenuated, the fault of his unhappy wife, and merely called for nominal damages.

The murmur of applause which ran through the court at this short but manly address, joined to the hisses of indignation, which in spite of calls to order, would be heard at the dark system of cruelty and

subsequent falsehood, laid open by the cross-examination of their witnesses, and particularly of the arrogant and unfeeling duchess, who was completely baffled with her own tools, told the revulsion which had taken place in public opinion, and the verdict of the foreman of the jury was received with loud plaudits:—

"That they merely gave the nominal damages to enable the unfortunate lady to be legally divorced, and at the same time made them of the smallest possible amount of *one farthing* to show their contempt for the base line of misrepresentation dictated to the counsel for the plaintiff, and of the cruel and systematic line of cruelty carried on for so many years against his unfortunate wife."

Even Lady Eastham's now chastened feelings could not resist a glow of triumph at this signal defeat of a family who had always appeared to her so singularly unamiable, and more especially as it entirely relieved her

poor friend from the dark burden of shame they had endeavoured to lay upon her, and left but that inevitable stain on her fair fame consequent on the step she had taken, and which, God knows, to every sensitive and innately pure-minded woman, must be heavy enough to bear, without the addition of unmerited obloquy.

When Clara joined Theresa after the perusal of this interesting trial, she found her already improved in appearance, and even in actual bodily strength, from the calm relief it had brought to her nerves.

There seemed now only to require the legal deeds of the pending divorce, to enable her to become the wife of Ernest Cavendish as effectually in the eyes of men, as she already fain would hope she was in the eyes of heaven, to complete her desires on earth.

To facilitate this wished-for event, by every means in which money could hasten "the law's delay," she consented to a temporary separation from her betrothed, who was to

hasten to London to expedite this desirable end, and returning through Paris, was to be accompanied by the chaplain of the English embassy, with every necessary document to legalize their union.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious courts?
Here feel we but the penalty of Adam."

As You Like It.

Perhaps there are few things on earth more pure, and more devoid of the sensual dross of humanity, than the gentle communings of female friendship, when time has stamped them with a reality beyond the evanescent impression of girlish romance, and, still remembering the glow of those earlier days, feels that age has but strengthened, not impaired their fidelity.

Although there was much in this delightful feeling which could not be applied to Clara and the unfortunate Theresa—much that never could have subsisted, as they had not in early life been friends together—and each confided to the other the mingled joys and anxieties of opening womanhood—much that, in the painfully peculiar situation of the one, precluded that unreserved openness which is one of friendship's dearest privileges, still there was a blessing and a comfort to the heart of both in the daily and affectionate intercourse which subsisted between them, and which gave wings to the foot of time.

While the delicacy of Theresa's position precluded Clara from feeling fully at her ease with her, fearing that, in the overflow of unrestrained conversation, she might unintentionally wound her sensitive feelings, she could yet listen with heartfelt interest to the narration of hopes and doubts with

which her prospect of futurity was mingled. When dwelling on the unceasing and untiring devotion which she had hitherto received from Ernest Cavendish—and her words and her countenance alike glowed with gratified love—she would fondly express her woman's wish that they might always remain thus the whole world to each other; that they might continue in this beautiful valley to pass their time in blissful retirement.

"But alas," she would add, "I know this cannot satisfy him long, I ought not to expect it would, for the heart of man is differently constituted, and demands a wider sphere for action than merely the domestic affections. Our large fortune, too, will remind him of the figure he may make in the world he has left, and this, dear Clara, I feel with trembling, and dread the recurrence of all the galling indignities I here escape from. Aid me, dearest friend, to

persuade Ernest to remain in this blissful retreat for at least a few months, till I am quite well in bodily strength again."

When Clara would return from her visits to her friend to the calm routine of gentle duties which she saw carried on in the convent, she could not but contrast to advantage the peace of a well-regulated mind, to the fearful doubts and fears which agitated that of poor Theresa, and doubly would she feel the advantage of those strengthening principles, and ennobling motives for action, with which the estimable abbess had not vainly sought to inspire her.

In this improved state of mind, she found that health gradually returned to her cheek, and a cheerful even flow of spirits succeeded the feverish excitement in which she had been living. She now felt herself equal to the encounter of what had so lately prostrated the powers of both body and mind. But then she came to the conflict trusting

in her own fortitude, now the knowledge of her unassisted weakness, caused her strength, and looking to an aid more than human for support, she trusted to fulfil the duties of that state of life in which God had placed her, with an unflinching and entire dependence on his heavenly protection and support.

In this serene and altered frame of mind, she wrote to inform her husband of the rapid improvement in her health, and to beg he would himself come and fetch her back, a very different creature to what she had left him. She knew the hunting-season was now drawing to a close, and she should ask no infringement of his pleasures in leaving Eastham, besides which, she did his love the justice to feel assured the delight of bringing her back with him in such renovated health and spirits, would at any time have been joyfully undertaken by him.

Theresa was now counting with feverish

excitement the days which would elapse ere before her lover could return, while Clara, with chastened satisfaction, dwelt on the pleasing anticipations that not long afterwards she might expect her husband to restore her to her home duties, and her friends—she even endeavoured to think of Lord Desmond as numbered among the latter with calmness.

At length, she received a summons from "La Chaumière Anglaise," to come and gladden with her presence the performance of that nuptial ceremony, for which Ernest Cavendish was returned with every needful document, and as he purposed, accompanied by a clergyman from Paris.

She had previously consulted Lady Katherine Arundel, on the propriety of being present at this marriage, who, consistently with her former opinions on this subject, saw no objection, under the whole circumstances of the case, and the guarded privacy which

was now to be observed, to Clara acceding to the urgent desire of Theresa for her presence.

The morning was unusually cold and showery, which induced Mr. Cavendish to retain the post horses which had brought him the last stage of his journey, and send them with his travelling carriage for Lady Eastham, which enabled her to assume a more recherché dress, than had been her wont in the convent, or would in any way have accorded with her mountain rambles.

The abbess could not refrain from a natural burst of admiration at the unexpected appearance of her "beautiful child," in this unwonted elegance of costume, which delighted the faithful Janet far more than those than she to whom it was addressed, though there might have been a touch of excusable self-congratulation, as she turned from the simple toilette-table in her convent room, where she had seen herself reflected

so much more the Clara of former days, than she had for very long appeared.

As Mr. Cavendish handed Clara from the carriage at the door of the cottage, he was not without his complimentary felicitations on the return of her health and beauty, while he warmly thanked her for thus kindly coming to them on the present occasion.

"But I shall leave Theresa to explain to you her fanciful idea of *where* the ceremony is to be performed, and I hope you will not object to indulge her, though it is rather a cold day for such a purpose," and he attempted a smile and hilarity of manner which it was evident he did not feel, but thought necessary for an occasion which ought to be the proudest and happiest of a man's life.

But, alas! what can the wedding day of a divorcée be but one of shame and self-reproach, rather than that joyous feeling of

innocent delight when the young bride, surrounded by approving friends, plights her young faith to the chosen of her heart.

If the contrast of what his wedding-day might have been in earlier days, even cast its constraining gloom on the worldly and hackneyed mind of Ernest Cavendish, how much more must it be felt by the gentle and sensitive being who was the partner in his guilt!

Theresa was in her own little dressing-room when Lady Eastham arrived, and only welcomed her approach by a silent embrace, mingled with tears. This was the first time she had cast off her mourning garb for her child, but had now the good taste to avoid anything in her costume which could be termed bride-like. Nevertheless, there was somewhat more elaborate than usual in her dress, and which betrayed a desire to look well in the eyes of him she alone now felt any wish to please.

She was sitting on the sofa, her hand gently clasped in the soothing grasp of friendship, when Ernest Cavendish came to ask how soon he should order the horses.

"The horses! why, my dear Theresa, are you going to leave this tranquil retreat so immediately? I was not expecting this."

"Oh no, Lady Eastham," replied Ernest Cavendish, "we shall not move hence for some time yet, I think, Theresa seems so in love with this stupid place. But I find she has not explained to you our morning's destination, which I hope you will be good-natured enough not to quiz unmercifully, though I must own it is rather too much tinged with the romantic ever to have entered into my head. But on this day especially, my Theresa is bound to be indulged, even in caprices," and he attempted to bow gallantly as he spoke, though Clara could detect restraint, rather than natural ease, in his manner.

"But, to cut a long story short, this pretty capricieuse," and he tapped his intended bride's cheek gaily as he spoke, "feels an utter reluctance to being married in a drawing-room; that it will bring all the horrors of Kingston House fresh about her, and I don't know what other sad ideas and omens besides. Now, there is no Protestant church within reach of us; but she remembers the ivy-grown ruin in the furthest extremity of this valley, which the peasants tell us was formerly a Protestant place of worship, though now only resorted to by owls and bats, or, may be, turtle-doves occasionally, as a fitter comparison, and here we are romantically to plight our faith. Is it not so, dear one?"

But the poor Theresa could not return this vein of raillery; and, though the time had not come when she could even think him unmindful of her, she did wish he would not laugh on such a subject.

Turning to Clara, she said timidly, "I am sure, dear friend—at least, *I do hope*, you can enter into my feelings in this respect, or else they must be very foolish, and I will try to conquer them. You know my first marriage was in a drawing-room—it was unblessed by the hallowed walls of a Christian sanctuary; it was only conducted with the conventional forms of the world's ceremony. Oh, how my heart sickens at all that cold observance! But here, in this lovely valley, even at the ruined altar of my God, I feel as if I could best give and receive those solemn vows, which now indeed will come from my heart."

And throwing her arms round the neck of her beloved, she wept "love's own tears" upon his bosom. Ernest Cavendish was not of a nature to enter into these womanly gushes of tenderness, but the heart must have been yet more blighted from long intercourse with the world, than was even

his, could he have chided this genuine overflow of confiding attachment at such a moment.

But willing to shorten anything amounting to a scene, he methodically informed Clara, that according to Theresa's romantic fancy he had arranged with the clergyman to meet them at this ruined little church, as the license procured for the occasion rendered the place where it was performed of no consequence, even if she had chosen to fix on the grass-plot before their door.

"But now, dear ladies," he added, let us set off without further delay, or we shall freeze our good priest in the cold aisles of this almost roofless building.

It would have been a fine study for a painter, or a poet, to have sketched the group assembled that morning in the ruins of the little church of Russillon.

The small flock which once assembled in its holy walls had long been dispersed, the

stern arm of fiery persecution had once raised its banner in that peaceful valley, and the edifice dedicated to God and the people devoted to the purity of his faith, were alike laid desolate. The centre aisle yet remained untouched by time and devastation, while a few falling oak-balustrades marked what had once been the altar—the steps leading up to it were moss-grown and in some places overthrown, but the east window behind, yet glowed in some unbroken specimens of that splendid painted glass, which we now try in vain to imitate.

At the time we treat of, a fitful gleam of mid-day sun shone through the deep bright red of the ruby-tinted mantle of a St. John, yet perfect among the overgrowing ivy, and cast a faint tinge of colour on the pale cheek of one, who yet young in appearance, almost to girlhood, clung to the supporting arm of him, who apparently had nearly numbered twice her summers, but was cast in the finest outline of manly beauty.

The wind whistled through the crumbling walls, and it might be the chill of a sudden blast which caused a perceptible tremor to come over her, as she drew her ermine cloak yet closer round, and dropped the deep folds of a black veil over her face.

At her side stood a form of far more surpassing loveliness. The bands of her dark hair were drawn aside from a forehead of poetic beauty, and the fine contour of the features would not have shamed a Grecian statue. The graceful drapery of a rich velvet dress did not conceal the outline of the figure, while one small hand was held out to receive the gloves of the young bride, as she prepared to plight her troth to the lofty-looking being beside her.

The minister of religion stood at that crumbling altar, rendered sacred by the memory of saints and of martyrs who had worshipped there before him; and, as the full tones of his well-modulated

voice sounded through those long silent and desecrated walls, it seemed as if one from the dead spoke in their solemn deepness.

There was an imposing sanctity in the scene, so removed from the heartless ceremonials of the world that it was impossible not to bow beneath its influence; and when, clasping the trembling hand of Theresa in his own, he vowed to love and cherish her through life, never had the heart of the man of the world throbbed so high with virtuous resolves, or softened into more tender affection for the gentle girl who now vowed to be only his, to whom she had already devoted herself.

The nuptial benediction was given; Clara pressed the cold cheek of her friend, and, when they parted at the gate of the convent, none of them had any idea of not meeting on the morrow, or that many an eventful day was to pass over before they

again saw the other. So truly do the events of life confirm the Scripture assertion, "that we know not what a day may bring forth."

CHAPTER IX.

"The mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And ever in the office close
The hymn of intercession rose."
THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

"Io piego le mie ginocchia al Padre del Signor nostro Gesù Christo, pregandolo che vi dia, secondo le richezze della sua gloria, d'esser fortificate in virtù, per il suo spirito, nell 'nomo interno,"
PAOLO AGLI EFESINI CAPITOLO III.

ON the evening of the day of Theresa's nuptials, Clara was seated at the window of her little sitting-room, watching the bright tints of the setting sun, tinging with varied hues the lofty summits of the ridge of mountains before her, and comparing their awful sub-

limity with the wild, yet now, in comparison, trifling height of her native hills, which formerly had appeared so majestic in her eyes, and thinking how thus time and experience brought a change of opinions and feelings on all around us, and when our days and years had merged into eternity, how trifling would appear alike the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, of this transitory scene—when a loud ring at the great gate, at an unwonted hour for any intrusion on their regulated community, roused her from her reverie. Before she had time to resume the thread of her thoughts, the hasty steps of Janet sounded along the corridor, and she appeared pale and breathless, with a letter in her hand. Clara's first glance told her it was from Lady St. Clair, and her heart foreboded evil, when Janet added, it was brought by the same travelling servant who had escorted them here, but she had not stopped to talk; he only told her he had

ordered horses to arrive in the course of an hour for their immediate departure.

With a trembling hand, Clara broke the seal, and the contents seemed to verify her worst fears. Sir James Eastham had met with a dreadful fall in hunting the preceding day, and the immediate issue was for some hours doubtful. But then consciousness returning, his first wish was to see his wife, and the medical attendants held out hopes there might be an improvement before she arrived, but at present they thought it right to own the case was a very dangerous one.

It may be supposed that Lady Eastham lost not a moment in preparing for her immediate departure; Lord St. Clair's travelling servant had done justice to her intrepidity and carelessness of her own ease at such a moment, in ordering relays of horses through the night on the road he had just come, and she had barely time to bid an affectionate farewell to all the nuns, and a most grateful

one to the abbess, leaving a hurried note to be sent to "La Chaumière Anglaise," in the morning, when Janet's indefatigable zeal had prepared all their packages, and she was informed the carriage was in readiness at the great gate.

The tears of Lady Katherine fell warm and fast on the cheek of this beloved child of her adoption, as she clasped her to her heart in a last embrace,—and, forgetful of dignity or station, herself attended her to the carriage, and only relinquished her hand as the door closed upon her, and in a few moments the fast darkening hues of evening hid all traces of the travellers from her anxious sight.

But still, the Abbess of St. Madeline stood at the gateway of her convent, and, forgetful of the cold and darkness of night, or that her attendant nuns were crowding round, amazed at her unwonted situation outside the portal of her convent, she remained fixed in an attitude of fervent prayer, with her hands devoutly crossed on her

breast, until the receding wheels were lost in the distance, when turning slowly within the walls, she regained her quiet dignity of manner, and taking the way to the chapel, said in calm gentleness of tone, though the moisture of recent tears still hung on her cheek,

"My children, let an extra mass be said for the welfare of our departed sister, that her journey may be prosperous, and her affection lightened on arrival at home, by finding her husband recovering. But if it be the will of our Heavenly Father, to lay his chastening hand upon her, may she have strength to seek his glory in all things, and humbly say, 'Thy will be done!' I shall prolong my own prayers until the midnight-bell has tolled, but I do not require your attendance so long, unless love for our sorrowing sister induces you to remain."

Clara had made so rapid a progress in the affections of the amiable sisterhood with

whom the last few months had made her a resident, that not one anxious heart wished to leave the prolonged vigils of that evening service, until the deep-toned bell, floating on the stillness of the night, told that the morning hours had commenced, when Lady Katherine, wrapping her sable veil around her, after a double prostration before the holy altar, preceded her nuns from the chapel, and blessed them individually as they separated to their respective cells.

While the unsophisticated hearts of this unworldly community were offering up their most heartfelt prayers in behalf of the traveller, she was speeding on her anxious journey, with nothing to relieve the tedium of hours which seemed of interminable length. The night was dark and gloomy as her own forebodings—but nothing impeded her progress; the attentive forethought of her experienced courier made everything easy, and she had only her own

powers of endurance to consult. Happily, her bodily health was so completely re-established that she was not called upon to consult it, and she travelled on, day and night, with a rapidity she would have thought incredible had not her thoughts, her desires, all been bound up in one—the eager wish of reaching Eastham Court as speedily as possible. Thus, totally regardless of her own ease, she landed once more on her native land in a wonderfully short space of time from the evening on which she left the peaceful convent of St Madeline.

On reaching England, her first thought was to inquire if any letters awaited her, by which she happily received rather an improved account of the sufferer, and, with renovated strength from this relief to her spirits, she pursued her homeward journey, with the accelerated speed of English posting.

As she came within the line of country so well known, her anxiety seemed to increase with every mile; and, when every turn in the road, every field, became familiar, and at last the towering woods of her own home appeared in sight, her impatience was almost too exciting for her recently-recovered strength.

The gothic gateway to the park was now in view—the rapid motion of four foaming horses had brought the lodge-keeper to throw it open before they actually arrived, and Lady Eastham whirled through so rapidly into her own domain, that she was not able to catch a gleam of information, either good or bad, from the affectionate countenance of the attached old porter at the gate.

The heavy battlements of the mansion now came in sight, and thick wreaths of smoke from the numerous chimneys rolled up, dark and murky, into the dense atmo-

sphere of a cloudy, winter day. Nothing else yet appeared in view, and Clara strained her eyes to catch a first glimpse of the windows of the house, she dreading that appalling funereal gloom of closed shutters which speaks beyond words to the trembling heart. But she was spared this afflicting shock. The end of the building containing her own suite of rooms, first came in sight, and she caught the wide oriel window of her sitting-room, bright and cheerful, with its stand of flowers and rose-coloured draperies, with all the yearning thankfulness of a condemned criminal receiving the hoped-for reprieve.

The thick laid straw on the drive up to the house, and the muffled ring of the bell, told too plainly it was the abode of sickness; but, thank God, not yet of death. With trembling eagerness, she watched the countenances of the servants who opened the door; and a smile on the face of the old butler almost spoke to her of hope.

"Oh, my dear lady," he said, as Lady Eastham kindly held out her hand to him, "I am glad indeed to see your Ladyship come back to us, and looking so much better yourself, and so much stronger than when you left. If anything can do my poor master good, it will be the sight of you; but God knows your Ladyship must not be too much shocked with the alteration in his appearance, for he is sadly changed. I did not think it possible so short a time could have caused such an alteration."

It was well Lady Eastham was thus warned, or her fortitude might have been too severely taxed. Propped up in bed, with eyes closed, partly from weakness and partly from pain, she could scarcely have recognised the hale and robust countenance of her husband in the pale and already emaciated being before her.

She gently kissed his cheek, and a momentary flush of pleasure spread over his

wan features. "Thank God, you are well enough to come back to me, my sweet wife. Undraw the curtains, nurse, and let me see how my Clara looks; there—leave us alone—I shall like to talk to her again, and hear her voice, even if I cannot say much myself."

After a few feeble attempts to ask some questions of his wife, the poor suffering Sir James found he must rest satisfied with hearing the beloved tones of his Clara's voice, while he listened with interest to the rapidity of her journey, and the improvement of her own health.

"But, my dear love," he then added, "I must not be so selfish as to keep you here without any rest, or refreshment, after your fatiguing journey. Go, dearest, while I lay and sleep—the hope of your arrival has prevented my getting any lately, and now I know you are near me, perhaps I can rest.

You must take care of yourself for my sake, for I fear I shall seldom like to lose sight of you—I could fancy I already feel the better for your return."

CHAPTER X.

"O woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable, as the shade
By the light, quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!"

MARMION.

WHEN Lady Eastham left the sick-room of her husband, she met the physician entering for his daily visit, and anxiously waited his return to the drawing-room, to receive the bulletin of the day. This same physician had been in attendance on Clara before her departure for the continent, and now sincerely rejoiced at the visible im

provement in her health. "But my dear lady," he said, on coming from the invalid, "I must insist on your taking some necessary food and rest before you enter on the arduous duty of Sir James's constant nurse. He has told me of your hurried journey, and of the many nights you have passed without sleep. You must recruit yourself, or I cannot answer for the consequences to your own returning health. Before I was aware that you could have reached Eastham Court by this time, I arranged for Mr. Brown to pass the night here, which we have done alternately since this unfortunate accident! But if you will consent to recruit yourself, as I recommend, to-morrow the charge of the sick-room can devolve upon your hands; and I am sure, with such care, if any mortal means can ensure recovery, we shall have every reason to hope it."

Clara promised to follow the kind physician's advice, and not attempt to pass an-

other night in watchfulness, and she could the more readily seek repose from knowing that the good Mr. Brown would be in attendance on the sick-room. She then anxiously entreated for the physician's real opinion of his patient, which he gave with the open sincerity of real truth, though unwilling to give unnecessary pain to his auditor.

Thus, in owning the extreme danger of the injuries, which were principally internal, he brought to her mind the conviction that there still existed some hope, and that his recovery must mainly depend upon his naturally good constitution, and the entire calm in which it was highly desirable he should be kept.

Clara was able the next day to take her place by her husband's bedside, and from henceforward, for many anxious months did she watch with woman's unconquerable patience. She was no longer the gay, the

admired Lady Eastham, the first of every party, the life of the dance and the song, but the quiet nurse, the untiring watcher, the affectionate anticipator of every desire of the invalid.

Lady St. Clair at first feared for the effect on her own recovering strength from this indefatigable attention to the sick-room, but she found her apprehensions were groundless.—In the path of duty, she could be strong.—She had only sunk when she trembled to pass its confines, now the line was clear before her, and she came to the undertaking with a recruited strength in both mind and body.

She had every encouragement in her anxious watching from the extreme pleasure her presence gave to the sufferer. No pillow was so comfortable as that placed by Clara, no draught so composing as when administered by her hand, no book so consolatory as when read by her voice. But

alas, all was of no permanent benefit, and at length his medical attendants were obliged to confess, that human skill was of no further avail, and that all which could be done was to mitigate pain, and to soften the approach of death.

It is strangely wonderful to remark how the links in our chain of life, are wrought together, and that events, at first sight, unconnected, yet on a close inspection are found secretly united, and even the minutest forms a part of the mighty whole.

Thus had the severe chastenings of Clara's own mind, the gradual development of the highest intellectual powers of her being, been instrumental in producing not merely the most important benefits to herself, but it might be also couducive to the immortal interests of that dear friend she was now called upon to attend through the painful ordeal of protracted suffering to the calm repose of death.

Now, Clara came to this sad office with a mind well attuned to its holy duties, and she again and again blessed that inscrutable and invisible power, which, in strengthening her own mind by its heavenly precepts, had made her a humble instrument for pouring the divine and consolatory truths of religion into the ears of the afflicted sufferer.

In this important office, she found a zealous and efficient coadjutor in Mr. Bouverie. Removed from the harsh creed of those who arrogate to themselves peculiar Christianity, he lived, a striking model, of its purest faith and practice. This minister of a gentle master, spoke the truths of the Gospel as they are found in the word of God, not as fallible man will turn and twist them for his own party purposes.

He called himself the follower of no particular sect, or denomination of Christians, that unhappily now divide those who call themselves of one church, as much almost as in

former days the names of particular persons were taken up by their adherents, and divided the body of Christianity into different parts. Mr. Bouverie took no opinions but those of the Bible for his rule of belief and practice—he humbly endeavoured to follow the example of his divine Master in all things, and thought this could best be done, by comforting the distressed, teaching the ignorant, and endeavouring to turn the wicked from the evil of his way, *not* by the fiery zeal of contending words, or the angry violence of party invective, *not* by that uncharitable *exclusiveness*, which shows itself quite as much in the religious world, as in the one of fashion, and seems ever ready to use the haughty expression, of "stand back, I am holier than thou!"

Mr. Bouverie's manners were removed from these, and their gentle friendliness made religion appear lovely rather than repelling. He was never wanting in "a

word in season," but he deprecated the mistaken notion, that religion was to be brought in, even by the neck and shoulders as it were, at all times and in all societies. To this he might mainly attribute the influence he now gained over Sir James Eastham's mind on the important subject of religion. It had never been his custom to fritter it away in the common conversation of general society, or to drag it forward among the idle gossip of the day. Now, then, therefore, when he spoke on the momentous topic to his friend, he listened with all the deep attention it deserved, and daily found that it became more interesting and more absorbing.

It was after a long interview with Mr. Bouverie, who had been reading and explaining the Holy Scriptures, ending with fervent and devout prayer, that Sir James called his wife to his side, and, wishing they might not be interrupted, said he thought

he now felt equal to speak on a subject very interesting to him, before he "went hence, and was no more seen."

"Nay, dearest Clara," he said, raising her hand to his lips, "do not weep at the thought that in all human probability my sufferings will soon be ended; but rather be glad in the assurance that your dear voice has gilded the path of death, and pointed the way to heaven. There is *one* subject connected with your earthly happiness I would fain speak of, and endeavour to insure it, when grief for me shall have sunk into only a gentle recollection of the past. Dearest, I have never been good enough for you; I never thought I was; but I never felt it so strongly as on this bed of death, when all your excellences are brought to light. Nay, do not answer me—I have not strength for much—let me go on. You will find I have thought of your comfort in my last will; everything is yours, with the

ope that you will marry again, and your on be legal heir to the estates, when I loubt not our kind sovereign will allow of his taking the name of Eastham. You know I have no near relatives—the nearest is a spendthrift and a blackguard. I could never leave my poor tenants in such hands, but with you and Lord Desmond they will be safe.

"Do not start, my Clara. Do you think I have never read the secret of his heart, and that it is not natural that two such noble natures as yours should love each other. But do not mistake me. I do not mean that you love him now, but that in course of time you will yield to love such as his. Yes, he deserves to win you, and in future years, let the thought that I have foreseen this, that I have wished it on my dying bed increase your happiness rather than diminish it. I cannot express the admiration I have felt of his conduct, for it was only eyes, as

acute as mine in all that concerns you, could have detected his love. He is a fine noble fellow, and I prove that I think so by saying he deserves even you. And now, my love, say not a word to me in reply. You are all that wife can be to me of dearest and best. You know I am not given to speeches, but some time or other, it will be a comfort to you to know how perfectly happy I have been since I was your husband, and how sure, though slow, must be the influence of a pure and high-minded wife on the mind. And now kiss me, my love, I will try to rest. I wish you would try and ride on Arab to-morrow. It would do you both good."

CHAPTER XI.

"In sight of heaven she pledged those vows, which, whilst her wedded life
Were all so scrupulously filled,—the nurse, the friend, the wife.
'Twas on her bosom her liege lord has breathed his parting breath,
And 't was *her* hand had closed his eyes in the last sleep of death.

True to those vows, she watched his couch—and although on her brow
Time's finger had but lightly touched, she was a widow now.
A matron before girlhood's years had passed from her young life;
A widow, even at the age when few are yet a wife."

DUBLIN REVIEW.

LADY EASTHAM had been watching the uneasy slumbers of her husband on the

night following the interview we have just recorded, until the small French clock on the chimney-piece chimed, with its silvery sounds, the approach of the midnight hour. It was a costly little bijou, selected as a wedding-present by the Countess of St. Clair, from a number of similar workmanship, on account of the little snuff-box waltz which it tinkled with fairy lightness before it struck the hours, being a particular favourite one of Clara's, and which she always danced with peculiar spirit. It was the very air to which she had danced with Lord Desmond on the evening of her ball, when they met again ; it was the very one they had often waltzed to in bye-gone days, when to the sound of Lady Adelaide's harp, they had sprung out on the green turf before the window, with all the hilarity of unbroken and youthful spirits.

As it now fell with its airy lightness in the chamber of death, it seemed in mockery

of its possessor's feelings, and ill accordant with the scene around. Clara rose from the table at which she was sitting, and gently putting aside the curtain which veiled the light from the sick couch, she gazed long and earnestly on the face of the sleeper. The lines of suffering were strongly imprinted on his forehead; but a smile half lingered round the mouth. It moved as if in convulsive tremulousness, and then formed itself into the dear familiar word of "Clara."

She was with him in his feverish sleep, and the consciousness of her presence was evidently pleasing, even then. Gradually, she thought, the lines of his brow unbent, and he seemed to sink into a more placid and quiet slumber. Long and anxiously did she linger beside him, until his regular and gentle breathing seemed to ensure the continuance of repose for some hours, when, carefully setting open the door into her

dressing-room, she carelessly threw her dressing-gown around her, unbound the dark masses of hair which pressed around her forehead, and threw herself on the sofa, which had now for so long been her only resting-place.

Her sleep even was thus watchful, and she could always hear the slightest movement of the invalid in the room, and start up in a moment to minister to his wants. But this night his rest must have been particularly calm, for her own light slumbers had never been broken in upon until the various notes of the birds out of doors told that morning was arrived.

She started at the unusual length of her unbroken rest, and listened if all was the same in the apartment of the invalid. The breathings of sleep still continued, though she detected a fluctuation in their regularity which she thought betokened awakening; and, to refresh herself for the closer

atmosphere of the sick room, she unclosed the window of that in which she was, and leaned out into the fresh air of the park.

It was a bright morning in summer—the sun was rising over the dark masses of trees beyond the Mere, and the foreground was sparkling with the thick heavy dew which betokens coming heat. It was too early for any human sounds to be heard; it was the animal creation alone that were now mindful of their Creator's blessings—and Clara thought as she viewed the still landscape, and breathed the fresh air, as yet uncontaminated by the breath of sin, that surely such a scene might be the emblem of heaven, where all was pure and calm.

After the painfully-anxious vigil of the past night, her spirits seemed more soothed by this silent communing with the placid face of nature, than with the sleep she had just risen from, and she turned from the window refreshed and invigorated by the

soft air which had been blowing around her.

The house was still wrapped in repose, and Clara resumed her seat by the sick bed, waiting till the nurse came to take her place, while she pursued a practice particularly recommended for the preservation of her own health under the circumstances of the continued fatigue she went through, of taking a daily walk in the gardens and Park before breakfast.

As she thus sat, she thought a change passed over the features of the sleeper, that an unnatural rigidity was coming on. She listened for the regular breathings of repose, but they had ceased, she bent her head nearer to be sure of the awful reality, and pressed the forehead, already chilled with the touch of death, with her lips—then there could be no mistake—and she felt at once that she was alone with the dead!

There are many who, in these trying cir-

cumstances, would have screamed, or would have fainted, or would have rushed out of the room. But Clara did none of these. She continued for many minutes to gaze earnestly on the face of the departed, and then sank down on her knees by the bed, and, covering her face with her hands, wept bitterly. At first, her ideas were confused and wandering. She could scarcely believe in the identity of her situation, and that death, so much dreaded, could have come with so little appalling in his aspect, and scorning, as it were, but a continuance of a profounder and deeper sleep. There was something also soothing to her mind that she had thus been with him to the last, and that the last word he had uttered, though apparently under the delusion of a dream, had been her own name.

While employed in these sad, though consolatory thoughts, the nurse entered the room, and her experienced eye at once told

her the fatal truth. She possessed none of the officious fussiness of her vocation, and gently raising Lady Eastham from her kneeling attitude, she placed her arm within her own, and ringing the bell for the attendance of Janet, at once quietly led her unresisting steps to her private sitting room.

To say that Clara experienced any of the turbulence of grief, would be an exaggeration; while she had sufficient self-command to give the necessary orders, there can be no doubt but she felt deeply the awful bereavement of her situation.

The considerate forethought of her late husband had spared her all trouble in the way of business; and the man of law, who had made the last will, was one of uprightness and integrity, to whose counsel and guidance in money matters Sir James knew he might safely leave his inexperienced wife, who had also ready and affectionate advisers at hand, in both her uncle and Mr. Bouverie.

The Countess and Emma Bouverie each sought without delay the house of mourning, and alternately staid with the young widow till the melancholy day of the funeral arrived, and the unclosed windows of the ancestral mansion, told that the last of the race was taken to his long home, that the presence of death no longer hung as a funereal pall before the bright face of nature and the inhabitants of that melancholy mansion.

It would be difficult to describe Clara's feelings as she first went into her own sitting-room, and saw the cheerful sun again brighten the window, the heavy shutters removed, and the fresh air of a summer's day breathing over the choice flowers, which cast their cheerful fragrance around. The gloom of death was taken from her dwelling, but not yet could she forget, or did she wish to forget, *she was alone.*

It was fortunate for the young mistress of Eastham Court, that the interests of her

tenantry, the welfare of her dependants, the improvement of her schools, were a legitimate and useful source of interest and occupation. When she had become settled, as it were, in the sovereignty of these princely domains, she did not shrink from the burden of herself attending to their duties.

Hers was not the frivolous mind of the mere woman of fashion; she had drunk deep of the intoxicating draught of flattery and adulation, but it had palled upon her taste, rather than become necessary to her aliment. And she had since partaken of the purer and more enduring pleasures of right constituted principles in the ennobling precepts of her friend, Lady Katherine Arundell, and now brought them daily into practice.

It was a pleasing and instructive sight to see that young widow, with all the glow of her perfect beauty fresh about her, sitting in one of the high-backed antique leather

chairs of the library of that noble mansion, with the knowledge of ages frowning in the dark oak-cases around her, while she was intently studying the weekly accounts of the venerable old steward, who, with his silvery hair parted on his forehead, stood by her side, admiring her steady perseverance in business, or glancing with a moistened eye to the deep folds of her mourning robe, and the quiet simplicity of her widow's cap, which reminded his attached heart of the loss of a kind and respected master.

Sir James Eastham had never been ostentatious in his charities, but he possessed the open heart and the ready hand, which made him generally beloved throughout his estates. On his marriage, Lady Eastham had readily obtained his consent to the enlarging a school of industry which had been founded by his excellent mother, but had latterly rather gone to decay from

wanting the fostering care and surveillance of female superintendence.

Here, as in every part of her extensive charities, did Lady Eastham make the discriminating powers of her judgment apparent. She steadily set her face against any of the modern innovations in the path of village-learning, and positively forbade the introduction of any religious books, except the Bible, the Church Cathechism, and the Prayer-book. She alike limited the knowledge of her pupils to simple reading and writing, with the first useful rules of arithmetic, joined to the good old English knitting and sewing, with a necessary insight into all household matters, for which several cows and a thriving poultry-yard was attached to the school, to initiate the children into the mysteries of the dairy and rearing of poultry, which would fit them alike for domestic servants, or the wives of the adjacent tenantry.

Soon after her marriage, the numbers of her school had increased fourfold, and were superintended weekly by her personal attendance, though unaccompanied by any of the bustling importance which some of our Lady Bountifuls attach to such duties, and love to bring prominently before their guests, even at the expense of their amusements, by some such well-contrived little plan as;—

"I am sorry, my dear Mrs. A——, I cannot drive you this morning, as I proposed to see the interesting ruins of the Castle; but I had forgotten this was *my school morning;* and I never allow my pleasures to interfere with my duties."

Of course, the disappointed Mrs. A. could only admire such self-devotion and kind principle, and inwardly wishing there were no such things as show-schools, patiently acquiesce in turning their morning's excursion into a dull homily upon the best methods of spelling and stitching.

Clara resorted to no such trickery as this to cheat her visitors into praises of her philanthropic benevolence; on the contrary, it is a question whether many of them knew she had a school, much less that it was the most judiciously conducted in the country: and they might have passed the neat-looking farm-house a hundred times, which educated nearly a hundred poor children, without an idea that this plain, unpretending building could be a school, instead of the fantastic Swiss cottage style, or more elaborate Gothic, which so generally points out in flaming characters, "This is my lady's school—see and admire her munificence!"

Lady Eastham had thus gone on the quiet tenor of her way in home duties, even when supposed to be immersed in all the fashionable gaieties of a most hospitable country-house: it is not, therefore, to be supposed that she relaxed in her charities or attention to the wants of her poorer

neighbours, now that the voice of feasting and mirth no longer resounded in her dwelling, and she was necessarily cast on her own resources for filling up the dreary period allotted by conventional forms, as well as dictated by the dearer sympathies of the heart, for mourning in retirement over the severance of nature's closest ties.

CHAPTER XII.

"I am not one who much, or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk
Of friends who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight."

WORDSWORTH.

"Se alcuna, pure esser religioso fra voi, e non tiene a freno la sua lingua, anzi seduce il cuor suo; la religione del tale è vana."

GIACOMO APOSTOLO—CAPITOLO I.

"It is very strange," said Miss Brierley, to the select little coterie assembled round her tea-table at Kingsland, "it is very strange that Sir James Eastham should have left the whole of his immense property to

his widow, and giving her the power ultimately to dispose of it as she pleases. I take it, she will not be a widow long.

"You make your statement rather too broadly, sister," interposed her brother, the lawyer, "I speak professionally, when I assure you that she has not the power of disposing of the Eastham estates, they are only hers positively for her life;" and he assumed an air of dictatorial authority at having asserted what no one would dare to contradict, and by which he wished to infer that he really had some personal knowledge of the affair in question.

"But, my dear sir, interposed the gentle tones of Mr. Silverdale, but who yet was not above the quiet enjoyment of saying disagreeable things in the sweetest possible voice, and piqued himself on taking up Miss Brierley's opinions, champion like, at all hazards, "I was not aware you had any thing to do with the Eastham property, and

the agent, who resides in London, is as close as wax: when he does come down, there is no getting a word from him."

"I only say what I know," retorted Mr. Brierley, considerably irritated at the inference he wished not being quietly made; "having read Sir James Eastham's will, I can positively affirm, that though the personal property is left solely and entirely to his widow, the landed property is tied up to the second son of any future marriage she may form, on his taking the name of Eastham, when it is requested the baronetcy may be sought to be renewed."

"And have you really seen Sir James's own will," said Miss Arkwright, the mistress of a fashionable and select ladies' seminary, conducted on Christian principles, now enjoying the freedom of the holidays, in a course of heart-searching tea-drinkings,—not aware in her increased respect for Mr. Brierley, that any one may read the will of the highest

noble in the realm, by merely paying a shilling at Doctors' Commons.

"Yes indeed, Miss Arkwright, I have had that honour, and therefore, I speak correctly when I affirm that I speak professionally. It is a noble will of the late baronet's, and Lady Eastham may think herself very lucky, marrying him as one may say, without any fortune of her own. But I expect if she goes on much longer attempting to manage her affairs without any legal adviser, that she will be getting into some scrape. But I could not do more than offer my services, which I must say were very unwisely declined."

"I fear," said the harsh tones of Mr Rugeley, "that Lady Eastham is a very obstinate woman, and deep set in the mire of ignorance and folly. Soon after her marriage, when I found that her school was increasing in an alarming degree, yea, verily alarming unless conducted on true evangelical principles, I went to her, and in search-

ing language pointed out the danger she was incurring, and proposed as a minister of our holy religion, to attend weekly for prayer and expounding, offering her the use of such godly books, as "Choice hymns for the young lambs," "Roses of Sharon for godly children," and "The blessed experience of six young disciples," who at the early age of four years were called from the ways of sinful idolatry to taste the blessed fruits of election and final perseverance—explaining these great doctrines to the edification of many a hoary sinner who attended their death-bed. But, alas! these spirit-stirring books were refused, on the dangerous plea that the Bible only was admitted as a code of Christian principles and practice, and that she need not require my personal labours, inasmuch as she was in the parish of that worldly-minded, vanity-loving, dall-going priest, Mr. Bouverie. I had wished much to have been admitted to the

sick-room of the dying sinner, but there again, only Mr. Bouverie was admitted, and he could have had none but legal advisers, those who would tamper with the weal of his perishing soul, and cry, peace, peace, when there was no peace."

"But Mr. Rugeley," interposed Mr. Brierley, "I think you are under some mistake, I again speak professionally, when I affirm that Sir James had no *legal* advisers whatsoever, except the one gentleman who made his will quite according to his own fancy. I never saw a more unprofessional document, though I must own it was clear and distinct, but too short by half."

"Mr. Brierley, Mr. Brierley," said the deep tones of Mr. Rugeley, "you speak according to the weakness of your spiritual gifts, not according to knowledge. When I made use of the word, *legal*, it was in a heavenly sense, not a worldly—but it is ever thus — earth, will be of the earth, earthy."

The rebuked little lawyer shrank back aghast at this failure in spiritual knowledge, and allowed his more experienced sister to proceed in the discourse.

"Indeed, my dear sir, these are awful signs of wickedness, and I myself can testify to the barrenness of the land. For thinking, after Sir James's death, that Lady Eastham might have some inpourings of truth as to the folly of her former pursuits, I took the liberty of calling, and must own I was received with all the outward observances of civility, though I could see at once there was no inward yearning of the soul to me, as to a sister in the Lord; but when I offered, for the divertissement, as it might be, of her widowed hours, that she would take a part with our godly little community, and employ her time in advocating the blessed cause of Christian missions among the poor in her vicinity, and incite them to give their pennies weekly in this righteous

cause—I almost fancied a smile lurked in her eyes as she replied that she had no talent or wish either to take their little earnings from the poor, but she would have the pleasure of giving me five pounds, which would be more than she should be able to collect by single pennies during a long period. Of course, I could not take offence at this polite mode of refusing to join us, but I lamented that it was given with so small a portion of Christian zeal, and I rose to depart with sorrowful feelings for her deluded and benighted condition."

"Do not you think," said Miss Arkwright, speaking in an insinuating tone to Mr. Silverdale, "that it is rather unbecoming in Lady Eastham to be seen riding about in her widow's weeds on horseback, or I should say without them? I am sure, if I had been blessed with a husband I loved, I should have mourned his loss too acutely to bear to be seen thus exposed to public view."

"It is not to be expected, my dear young lady," an epithet he always found those of certain age delighted to be indulged in, "that all should have your delicacy of feeling and tenderness of disposition. But I must in some degree exonerate Lady Eastham from blame in this respect, from hearing Mr. Brown himself say that her health depended upon this exercise, and she is never seen beyond the limits of her own park, which certainly takes off from the publicity you complain of, and which grates on your feminine sensibility."

"Indeed, my love, you are too fastidious," joined in Miss Brierley, who delighted to see her *dear* friend and the interesting curate at issue, "no one but an *old maid* (and her sharp little eyes glared with satisfaction at the rosy suffusion the epithet had called up) could think of finding fault with poor Lady Eastham for this. I go on the charitable maxim of 'giving even the devil his due;' and

I hear from my cook, who is sister to the still-room maid at Eastham Court, that my lady never puts off her widow's cap, even in riding; but, as she goes out in all weathers, she then wears a large black chip bonnet, and she had a black habit come down from London on purpose, though I know for certain she had quite a new one of so dark a shade as no one could have taken it for a colour. I know I myself was mistaken in it, when I saw her riding early one morning to St. Clair Park, but a short time before poor Sir James's death, and thought it was rather unfeeling to order a black habit to be in readiness, as a body might say. But every one may be mistaken, and so was I, in spite of my having a particular quick eye in discriminating shades of colour."

"And shades of character, too, my dear Miss Brierley," adroitly interposed the gentle Mr. Silverdale. "Would that, with your clearness of perception, all had your

open ingenuousness, in confessing yourself in error. But the evening grows to a close, before Mr. Rugeley improves it with exposition and prayer; may I not beg you to spiritualize it with some of those holy songs which come as rain from heaven on the parched soil?"

While Miss Brierley was charming her Christian audience with the dulcet tones of her voice, which were warbling of mystic love in a key utterly at variance with the notes she was playing, and must have puzzled the composer in proportion as its fervour delighted her hearers, a different tea-party was assembled in the smart "best parlour" of Mrs. Brown, which we have before attempted to describe.

Kingsland, like all other republics, was divided into petty states, which not unfrequently were found to war upon each other, though in semblance they kept themselves determinately aloof. In one thing only they

seemed to unite in purpose,—the thinking their superiors in rank a common subject for curiosity and scandal.

"You have only taken two dishes of tea, Miss Quirk," said the good-hearted Mrs. Brown, on hospitable cares intent. "I fear I have not made it to your liking."

"Oh, yes, I assure you it is extremely good," replied Miss Quirk, though with an air of superior good taste which wished to insinuate it was extremely bad, "but I must own that since I have been so much at Kingsland House, I have grown very particular about my tea. The Duchess says she never can buy any fit to drink in the country, and indeed never takes any but Howqua's mixture, for which she has been kind enough to give me the address, and the clever young Marquis and I had a most interesting, and I may say abstruse dissertation on the origin of that name, which led to much of scientific research. I dare say

Mrs. Brown you have no idea how many of the words in common, and I may say vulgar use, have been originally derived from the most intellectual and refined sources, but are now perverted in a lamentable manner from the original classic pronunciation. Now, for instance, the Bell and Savage, which is an inn well known, I am told, in London, was formerly "La belle Suavage," to which I doubt not an interesting legend was attached, of perhaps some beautiful foreigner there taking refuge from the pursuits of her enemies. I could point out many others, such as the Bull and Mouth, but I shall only tire you, and I always wish to adapt my conversation to the taste of the company."

"Oh, no, I assure you Miss Quirk, I am by no means tired," replied the polite Mrs. Brown. "I have not much time for reading myself, but I like to hear of learning in others, and always bid my girls to mind their books

at school. And, besides, Miss Quirk, I feel quite at home like about your Bull and Mouth, for all Mr. Brown's physic-boxes are forwarded to us from there, so I may well understand something about the matter. I hope, Miss Arabella, you have brought your guitar with you, and will favour us with a song after tea. I hope soon we shall have a piano to ask you for a tune on, but while our little folks are so young, I told Mr. Brown it was only wasting of money to buy one till they were old enough to learn."

"I wish Mrs. Brown you could hear the Ladies Kingston sing; I am sure you would never like to hear my sister again. I tell her it is the sparrow after the nightingale." And the blue Miss Quirk looked anything but amiable at the beauty sister, who possessed in her eyes the undeniable disadvantage of being some ten years younger, and, moreover, with some pretensions to good looks. In any other family, these might

scarcely have been recognised, but in that of the Quirks they at once established her claim to be a beauty.

"Really, Miss Quirk," replied Mrs. Brown, with that innate good breeding which genuine kindliness of heart so frequently engenders, "I never wish to hear the Ladies Kingston, if I am thus to lose the pleasure I feel in listening to your sister. I am sure I never enjoy anything more than the old ballads I remember from a child sung in her sweet voice. So don't mind what your sister says, Miss Arabella, but pray favour us with a song.

"Indeed, Mrs. Brown," said the disconcerted beauty, "I very seldom attend to what my sister says, or I should have nothing else to do."

The good-natured Mr. Brown attempted to stem the tide of family discord which was impending, but in vain: the clouds still hung heavy on the contracted brow of the

elder sister, when, like a skilful manœuvrer, he attempted to divert the storm which he saw must fall, in an opposite direction, and he asked of Miss Quirk if, in the frequent intercourse she talked of with the family at Kingsland, she ever heard them allude to the unfortunate Lady Stavordale.

"Unfortunate, indeed!" exclaimed Miss Quirk, "I am indeed astonished to hear you Mr. Brown, a married man, a moral man, and a father of a family, with daughters growing up, speak of a divorcée as merely *unfortunate;* ought you not rather to call her the most abandoned of her sex, a disgrace to our common nature, who could thus leave the protection of such an amiable and highly-talented family, to follow a mere beggar, one who was only tolerated in good society? But I assure you I never touch on this delicate subject with my injured friends at Kingsland House: I know too well how acutely their sensitively gentle

nature must feel this base ingratitude for all their kindness. I only hope the Marquis may soon console his wounded heart with a more congenial partner; I often think he seems wonderfully soothed by discussing philosophical points with me, and, if he can once bring the forces of his strong mind into a clear perception of the scientific truths I delight to study, I am sure he will find the research of wonderful benefit to his widowed affections.

"Oh, ho!" thought the acute Mr. Brown, "sets the wind in that quarter!—the august family of Kingsland must indeed be 'fallen from their high estate' if they can condescend to accept of a Miss Quirk, even in the character of a *Toady*, much less as a soi-disant friend, and for even her philosophical folly to indulge the absurdity of their ever tolerating her as an equal."

The feud between the sisters being now decidedly averted, and a nudge and private

wink from the well-meaning doctor to his wife, advising her to say no more about the song for fear of renewing animosities, the conversation took a desultory turn, and sank into that harmless twaddle which is the general characteristic of country tea-drinking, interspersed with the occasional enlivener of a little private scandal.

Mr. Brown's "young man" on these occasions was admitted from the shop, *genteelly* termed a surgery, to play the beau and the agreeable, in which be it known the town of Kingsland was wofully deficient, himself, Mr. Silverdale, and a tall gaunt clerk of Mr. Quirk's, who bit his nails, and had a constant eruption on his face, being the only attempts of the kind it could boast. This youthful aspirant to the favours of Esculapius and of Cupid was gallantly engaged in holding some silk for the youngest Miss Quirk to wind on a delicately-embossed winder, and comparing its azure hue to the clear blue of her eyes.

The young man might be rather juvenile out of choice; but still he promised well for a beginner, and the fair lady was not very particular on either the score of compliments, or the payers of them. "Any thing was better than nothing," was evidently a favourite axiom.

"Do you think Lady Eastham very beautiful?" demanded the untiring silk-winder.

"Really," replied the youth, half puzzled, as he had never seen her ladyship but once, when he had taken a message of excuse to Eastham Court from Mr. Brown, for delaying the hour of his daily visit on account of an unexpected call elsewhere at the moment he was setting off—"really," and he made a dash at it, "you know I admire no style of beauty but yours."

This went off extremely well; and learning from the rejoinder that Lady Eastham's were dark eyes and hair, enabled him in

his next conversation with the lawyer's clerk, to quote her ladyship's "splendid black eyes" as his standard of female loveliness.

In the meantime, the name caught Miss Quirk's listening ear, who, apropos of nothing, wondered when they should hear of a wedding at Eastham Court. She did not suppose Lady Eastham would wait long; it was known all over the county she was in love with Cecil Aston when she married Sir James, and her great fortune would now come in very conveniently to prop his fallen fortunes.

Mr. Brown usually let the Kingsland gossip pass unrefuted, but both Lady Eastham and Cecil Aston chanced to be especial favourites of his, and he could not refrain from politely saying, "He was shocked to contradict a fair lady, but he knew positively there was no truth in the report she mentioned, and he likewise had his own

pretty strong surmises that Mr. Cecil Aston was attached elsewhere."

Miss Arabella bridled up and blushed, thinking of a now far distant ball, but still vivid in her pleased recollections, when, on "electioneering plans intent," it had fallen to her lucky lot twice to become his partner. The remembrance of such a conquest cast no favourable halo round her present Adonis, and, twitching her silk off his hands with no very gentle jerk, she ventured on giving her sister a broad hint it was time for them to be moving; and, in five minutes' time, the "best parlour" of Mrs. Brown, with its select society, lost the charm of their presence.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Hopes and fears which kindle hope,
And undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes, long subdued,
Subdued, yet cherished long."

CAMPBELL.

"MY dear Emma," said Lady Eastham one morning to Mrs. Bouverie," I have ridden over to you at an earlier hour than usual, just to clear my poor head from all the accounts my good old steward has been puzzling me with. Certainly there are many advantages attached to riches, but many cares too, especially, when devolving on a "lone woman" like me. I often think

yours is the more enviable lot, "an elegant sufficiency," with the husband of your choice.

"I am the last person in the world," replied Emma Bouverie, "to quarrel with my position in life, and yet you mistake if you imagine it has not its cares and anxieties as well as your own. What you call 'an elegant sufficiency,' would seem but a scanty pittance, after your princely expenditure; and I can scarcely fancy you contriving your children's old frocks to descend from one to another, or cutting your husband's coat into one for your boy, to say nothing of many a metamorphose on your dresses, and the trial of skill to renovate a piece of antiquity into a modern form. Yet all this I must have recourse to, though you see with a smiling face; and yet heavier anxieties are in prospect, when our boys must be educated, and our girls must be accomplished, according to their rank in life.

Now, all these troubles your money would save you, and many a puzzle which my poor little brain is racked with."

"Well, well," replied Clara, "I believe you are right, and I will not repine that I am blessed with all the luxuries of life, and certainly now they have spoilt me for ever being the thrifty manager you declare yourself, though I am sure no one would imagine your ingenuity was so taxed, for both your children and yourself always look nicely dressed. Do you know, I often think that ma belle tante, your dear little self, and your humble servant," with a playful bend of her graceful figure, "are the best dressed women in the country. We each have our different styles, but we keep them correctly. Now I am sure there ought to be established orders in dress as well as in architecture, and a mixture of them has as grotesque an appearance as a porch would have, with one Corinthian, and one Grecian

column. Now yours is the Grecian, elegant, but simple; mine would be the Corinthian, more studied, and of more elaborate workmanship; and Lady St. Clair's must be the composite, a mixture of all that is rich and rare, but combined with perfect rules of art and taste. There, Emma, what say you of my new code for dress-makers? I know some ladies of our acquaintance who would benefit greatly by a study of it. When I have daughters, I shall certainly teach them not to despise acquiring a good taste in dress. It is a dreadful thing to have the eye exposed to the various outrages our friends will persist in inflicting."

A furtive smile glanced in Emma Bouverie's laughing eye at the allusion of her friend to future daughters, and a playfulness and light cheerfulness ran through her manner and conversation, which she delighted to see, and encouraged her to remark,

"You must soon, dear friend, set us the

example again; it is time to doff these sable weeds, and I shall enjoy to see your dark hair once more, and mounted on Arab, with your becoming little hat again, instead of this great poke bonnet."

"You are right, Emma," said Lady Eastham, "it is time that the usages of the world should be complied with, and that I resume a less mournful garb; but I feel almost a superstitious dread in doing so. I cannot explain to you what I mean. I believe I scarcely understand it myself. But it seems as if there was something sacred in this dress to keep me from the anxieties of life —as if now my thoughts could not stray into all those wild fields of youthful romance I once loved so dearly. I have lately felt more the happy calm of childhood, after having said a good day's lessons, and not once been chidden for idleness and neglect, than anything I can bring as a comparison in later life. The time never seems to weary,

the hours never hang heavy on my hands. Oh, Emma, I dread to break into this peaceful repose. I feel now more like the Clara Cameron of my earliest recollections than the Clara Cameron of later years. If you knew how I tremble to relinquish the one for the other."

"My dear friend," rejoined Mrs. Bouverie, "you do not do justice to the rectitude of your own principles, to the purity of your right feelings. What you describe as the calm satisfaction of childhood's well-spent day, is the most beautiful illustration of the maturer consciousness of duties fulfilled. You know I am no flatterer, dearest, but I can safely assure you, that none but a well-regulated and highly-purposed mind could have gone through the trying scenes of your later life, as you have gone through them. And, doubt not but a reward awaits you even in this life."

"My dear Emma, to what do you allude?"

asked the conscious Clara. "But, hush—tell me not now—not now in this garb of mourning for the kindest and best of husbands. In a little time, I will allow my thoughts a wider range, and we will talk, dear friend, of what may be. Now we will turn to other subjects. Here is a letter I received this morning from Theresa Cavendish. If I look into futurity for that poor girl, I do indeed see much to fear, and little to lead on any hopes for her ultimate happiness. Already I could fancy a shade of the future hangs over this letter. Read it—and give me your opinion.

"Brighton, July 18, —.

"You see, my dearest, kindest friend, by the date of this that we are already in England. I fought off the evil day as long as I could, but I believe Ernest is absolutely become home-sick, and would not be detained abroad any longer. And yet I do

not mean this in *my* sense of the word, for where shall I ever again find so dear and peaceful a *home* as that beloved little 'Chaumière Anglaise,' where you found us all the world to each other. But I ought not to complain, for that happiness lasted many many months, and you brightened it also with the blessing of friendship. How little did I think when you witnessed our solemn espousals in that valley's ruined church that I was to lose you for so many many months—even *years* it will soon become. It tells how long it must be, that now I have a smiling little cherub-girl by my side, and then, I had no hope of the kind. When I look at this dear child, my friend, I cannot tell you how my heart yearns with hopes and wishes for the future. I am glad this is a girl—there is less to remind me of my lost treasure—and yet I wish not to forget him — oh! no, never, never would I forget him if I could: —

'All earthly taint, all mortal years, however light they fly,
Must darken on the glowing cheek, and tame the eagle eye!
But thee!—my bright unwithering flower!—my spirit's hoarded store!
I keep through every chance and change, the same for evermore!'

This sweet little smiling fair-haired girl, is very different to the deep expression of his 'cloudless eyes,' but she is a great comfort to me, and when now, in England, I am often left alone, I find a never-ceasing interest in her innocent and guileless love. We have taken a large house here, in the most fashionable situation, and Ernest wishes us to begin giving parties now, before the more élite of society pour in, and if we are found thus established, he thinks others visiting us will go on as a thing of course. But I cannot tell you how I tremble at making the experiment: I remember too well the galling mortifications I have

experienced, and the withering frown it always brings upon his brow, not to dread a renewal of all this. When I beg for peaceful retirement, and proposed taking a house in the most unfrequented part of the Isle of Wight, there is now an unanswerable argument for my mother's heart, that it is contrary to the interests of our child—that I must make my way and regain my position in society, before she is old enough to feel the want of that consideration which is so essential to woman. My dearest Clara, would that you were near to comfort and to support me. But this cannot be, and I ought to be very thankful for all the blessings I enjoy. Yet I cannot sometimes help envying the country life you tell me you are spending, and all its quiet and peaceful pleasures. I should like to buy a country place, and with my husband and my child near me, pass my time in useful duties. But this is not Ernest's taste; he will never

be satisfied in retirement, and as long as he is happy I can never be the contrary. I wish you could be persuaded to come here for a few months, Ernest bids me say so, with the offer of looking out an abode for you, if you will commission him. God bless you, my best friend; with unceasing remembrance of all your true kindness, believe me,

"Your gratefully attached,

"THERESA CAVENDISH."

"I agree with you," said Mrs. Bouverie, "on returning this letter, that a tone of sadness, unknown to the writer, reigns throughout the whole of it. I can very well understand Mr. Cavendish's wish of your going to Brighton: he is too much a man of the world not to be aware of the high value your countenance would be in helping his poor wife on into that society which the false step she has taken renders very doubtful if she will ever regain."

"Yes," replied Lady Eastham, "I fully see this, and at the same time, I have no intention of thus furthering his plans. I cannot wish to break those salutary laws of society which naturally cause a divorcée to be regarded with distrust. Theresa shall never meet with any thing but kindness from me, but at the same time, I am not called upon to come willingly, and even ostentatiously forward, to brave the opinion of the world in her behalf. I will never shrink from any proofs of friendship that come naturally in my way, but I do not see that I am called upon, or that it would be either feminine or right for me to go out of my way to sanction a step, which, though in her particular case, I pity rather than condemn, must in the eyes of the world be considered *en masse*.

"But here comes Mr. Bouverie with the newspaper in his hand, and he looks so delighted, I must stop to hear the occasion."

"I know, Lady Eastham, you are quite a

politician. I have often observed that you read the papers before any of your letters, and so unlike woman's taste for scandal and parties," glancing good-naturedly at his wife, "you always turn straight to the debates in the house. I positively never saw a woman do this before, and I have often in silence admired your good taste. Nay, you need not blush about the matter; I am sure there is nothing to be ashamed of, so now sit down again, and I will read you the most interesting debate that has taken place this session, with a speech of Lord Desmond's containing more splendid oratory than even he is wont to display. Now do for once, my dear Emma, try and be interested in a public speech; follow Lady Eastham's example, and see how she is evidently wishing me to begin."

The pretty little wife took up a baby's frock to mend, but during the long speech which followed, it is doubtful if she were

not more pleased with the fine reading of her husband, and the animated looks of her friend, than interested with the powerful arguments and high-minded patriotism of the speaker.

"Ah! Emma," I shall never make a politician of you," said her husband, laughing, "it really is a comfort to have such a listener as Lady Eastham, but I do not think one part of the speech is fairly reported. It strikes me as not doing justice to the language of the speaker, which falls in sublimity at the very moment it is rising to a climax, which is never Lord Desmond's style."

"You are quite right," interposed Lady Eastham, "this error struck me as you read, but I did not like to interrupt you. In my paper it is given more at length, and much more correctly. I will send it you this evening on my return."

"Why, my dear Lady Eastham," said Mr. Bouverie, "do you mean to say you

had read all this long debate before? I am sure I ought to beg your pardon for inflicting a second reading on you; and yet you never appeared the least tired. My little wife, who had never glanced at it before, seemed to think it a hundred times longer than you did."

The little wife smiled archly at her friend, as if she could detect some more womanly reason for her singular love of long political debates, but a sudden blush, and almost rising tear, called at once for her forbearance, and with delicate consideration she drew the conversation into another channel.

Strange mixtures do take place sometimes, and perhaps politics and love are as incongruous as any we have heard of; and yet so it was with Clara. The newspapers were the only aliment hers received, and yet it throve on what most would consider a most meagre diet. To her there was a world of deeper feeling hid in the glowing

[illegible] of the [illegible]: and, as with Mr. [illegible], she could enjoy every sentiment of the passage, there was yet a more intense delight in detecting the hidden feelings of the man.

When she had returned home that evening and looked for the newspaper in question to send as she had promised to the rectory, she yet indulged herself with another perusal of a sentence already engraven on her heart, and where she finally read a meaning which could reach no other eye.

Lord Desmond was dwelling on the improved prospects of Ireland, when he proceeded: "There is now a gleam of brightness in the future which I have never before beheld. I seem to identify myself with the fortunes of my country, and where most all was dark and cheerless, I can look forward to a happy futurity, brilliant in proportion as the glow of enjoyment is bright when coming after the

darkness of despair. Yes, my countrymen, if there is any truth in a presentiment of coming good, I feel that my present hopes will not be blighted, and, while I rise invigorated from the gloom of the past, I bid you also look forward to the bright reward which *gleams* with 'Hope's own roseate hue" in the distance."

Yes, thought Clara, as she read and reread this paragraph, there is more in this than meets the ear, perhaps while the house was ringing in applause for the statesman and the patriot, he, the magnet of that brilliant assembly, was stealing in thought to the scene of a still Scotch lake, and retracing the hopes which there were fostered, and which now once might bloom again.

Clara retired to rest that night with fresher feelings and a stronger mixture of tangled hopes and fears than she had ever yet allowed herself to indulge in, since she had felt it her duty to subdue every remem-

brance of the past. Her dreams restored her to her early home, and the voices of the dead and of the loved once again spoke in gentle accents to her soul.

CHAPTER XIV.

GUISCARD—Why weep and hide thy face?
Turn to thy Guiscard—turn to him who loves thee!
ADELGIVA—Thou lovest me!—oh! repeat those blessed sounds—
GUISCARD—Can'st thou doubt my love?
ADELGIVA—*Still* lovest me!—*still*—
Pronounce that word, 'still, still.'"—
M. G. LEWIS.

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The servants had relinquished their mourning for the rich livery of the family, and the young mistress of the scene had laid aside her weeds, while her dark raven tresses now unconcealed by the widow's cap, were once more bound around her head in their rich beauty.

Her dress was of simple black satin, which might pass unnoticed either as mourning or not, and as she caught a glimpse of herself in a large mirror as she passed, she almost started at the appearance which seemed to take her back many years in her existence.

The dangerous excitement of late years had vanished from her eye, the subdued sorrow of the last was worn away, and there was substituted in their place, a steady brilliancy, which had belonged only to the earlier years of her life. The elasticity of the light step was returned, the buoyancy of hope shone out on her clear open brow, while the smile around the mouth told no

tales of how long it had been a stranger there in all the genuineness of heartfelt happiness.

She stood in the large oriel window through which bright streams of sunshine from a cloudless sky, gleamed over a stand of choice exotics, which she carelessly ran over with her eye, as if her thoughts were wandering from the present scene. She then turned to a table and seated herself to the perusal of a new work—but it would not do —twice, thrice, did she peruse a page, and yet no trace of its import was made upon her mind.

She opened her writing portfolio, and took out some paper to begin a letter to Theresa, but unknown to herself the pen would only form itself into some well-known characters, which had long been forbidden to her mind. Insensibly *one* name, was scribbled down the page in every varied form, till she came to its extremest edge, when, smiling at her

[illegible] [illegible], but with some of the bitterness of [illegible]. She crumpled up the paper in her small hand, and tearing it into [illegible], again found herself employed in tracing them on the crimson velvet covering of the table, in the self-same initials as before, [illegible] [illegible] stood out as if inlaid in silver [illegible] [illegible] the dark texture on which they were traced.

[illegible]

the circle of the large window, and seated herself as she could command the longest view along the Park, and catch the first sight of the groom who brought the post-bag.

But it was not the letters she looked for—it was the papers she sought with eager interest, for there could she read the fervid eloquence of one who, placed on the high pinnacle of public fame, made the House of Lords resound not merely with the impassioned flow of patriotism, but with arguments of the soundest political wisdom. In that house, which may be justly considered the pride of England as containing the noblest of the land, men, whose unsullied characters match with their untarnished descent—among these, the Earl of Desmond stood pre-eminent, and though the bigotry and little-mindedness of party are found to debase even a section of this illustrious assembly, still even by them, while opposed, he was nevertheless, respected and admired.

There was a constancy in his public conduct, a straightforward, open, manliness of character, which won him the confidence of his bitterest opponents. He was never found either to stoop to the littleness of deceit, or to veil his sentiments at the shrine of expediency. His was no vacillating policy, but the bold, clearly-defined course of an uncompromising statesman.

Can it be wondered that Clara followed the trace of this brilliant career with all the warm-hearted fervour of her nature, now that she once again felt it was no crime to love the being of her heart's young idolatry? Can it be wondered that in the seclusion of her present life she had learned to place the bright hopes of the day on the arrival of the post, and that for once, newspapers were made subservient to a yet blinder deity than that of public opinion, or of expediency.

It is curious to trace how daily practice will accustom the eye to detect objects at a

distance, which a less experienced watcher would fail to descry even at a much nearer point. Thus Clara, from daily habit, had learned every break in the trees which admitted of the appearance of a horseman, and in one place could catch the passing glimpse of a hat—at another, perhaps merely an indistinct object through the branches, and then the full figure of both man and horse might appear for a moment, and be lost until the next opening would again give them partially to the anxious gaze of the watcher, when at last the sense of hearing would be brought to aid that of sight, and gradually the horse's steps would approach nearer, and finally clatter in glad certainty over the pavement leading to the stable-yard.

Then, there was the opening of a door leading from the offices into the hall to listen for, of which Clara could detect the sound from any other in the house, followed

[illegible] the [illegible] of the old [illegible] up the [illegible] and the [illegible] of her [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] before her.

[illegible] this had become a part of her existence during the last [illegible] monotonous months of her life; and a sacrifice which, in the [illegible] [illegible] of later years, she would have found impossible to endure, had become [illegible] dear to her heart, [illegible] perhaps, with a feeling unknown [illegible] as yet [illegible] to her own heart, that this [illegible] [illegible], this severe [illegible] [illegible], was owing to the [illegible] security of her faith in one who, without a [illegible], she might now confidingly believe had never wandered in his heart's [illegible] even at the moment when he had [illegible] to the altar.

Gradually had she removed the restraint so [illegible] and bitterly so [illegible] placed upon her feelings, and gradually and calmly, though not less surely and less deeply, had

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This morning she was strongly reminded of a fond fancy of her girlish days, when the natural buoyancy of her spirits would seem to receive some inward impulse, and she would exclaim, with a romantic presentiment of good, "I am sure something delightful will happen to-day."

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own folly, but with none of the bitterness of reproach, she crumpled up the paper in her small fair hand, and tearing it into atoms, again found herself employed in placing them on the crimson velvet covering of the table, in the self-same initials as before, where they stood out as if inlaid in silver mosaic, upon the dark texture on which they were placed.

"What folly is this!" her laughing voice now mirthfully exclaimed, and, holding one little hand to hold the fragments, while she brushed them into it with another; she danced with girlish glee to the open window, and scattered the tiny morsels one by one into the autumn breeze. This process filled up a more considerable portion of time than had yet elapsed, and looking at her watch, she found it did not want more than half an hour to the arrival of the post, when, in despair of any occupation filling her mind, she drew a slight French chair into

the circle of the large window, and seated herself as she could command the longest view along the Park, and catch the first sight of the groom who brought the post-bag.

But it was not the letters she looked for—it was the papers she sought with eager interest, for there could she read the fervid eloquence of one who, placed on the high pinnacle of public fame, made the House of Lords resound not merely with the impassioned flow of patriotism, but with arguments of the soundest political wisdom. In that house, which may be justly considered the pride of England as containing the noblest of the land, men, whose unsullied characters match with their untarnished descent—among these, the Earl of Desmond stood pre-eminent, and though the bigotry and little-mindedness of party are found to debase even a section of this illustrious assembly, still even by them, while opposed, he was nevertheless, respected and admired.

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Then, there was the opening of a door leading from the offices into the hall to listen for, of which Clara could detect the sound from any other in the house, followed

by the measured tread of the old butler up the marble stairs, and the fulfilment of her hopes in the letter-bag laid before her.

All this had become a part of her existence during the last, otherwise monotonous, months of her life; and a seclusion which, in the feverish excitement of later years, she would have found impossible to endure, had become inexpressibly dear to her heart, tinctured, perhaps, with a feeling unknown, and as yet, certainly unavowed to her own heart, that this tranquil calm, this serene hopefulness of temperament, was owing to the unwavering security of her faith in one who, without a crime, she might now confidingly believe, had never wandered in his heart's first love, even at the moment when he had led another to the altar.

Gradually had she removed the restraint so long, and latterly so efficaciously placed upon her feelings, and gradually and calmly, though not less surely and less deeply, had

they fallen back into the ineffaceable track of former years.

This morning she was strongly reminded of a fond fancy of her girlish days, when the natural buoyancy of her spirits would seem to receive some inward impulse, and she would exclaim, with a romantic presentiment of good, "I am sure something delightful will happen to-day."

At first, these vague anticipations of enjoyment would be fully answered to her young and unsophisticated heart by the receiving a new book, a longer scamper than usual on her mountain pony, or an unexpected expedition with the good vicar and his wife into some as yet unexplored scenery of that wild district.

Well did she remember the strong feeling of anticipated pleasure with which her ardent imagination had been imbued on the morning of the day which first introduced William Fitzgerald to her sight, and she had

dwelt on it as a bright fulfilment of a theory she delighted to indulge in, that a beneficent Providence allows a foretaste of coming felicity to irradiate the soul with its glowing tints.

The circumstances of later years had sternly forbade her indulging in these visionary fancies; but this morning she unconsciously found her heart once more whispering, "I am sure something delightful will happen to-day;" and, as she watched for the arrival of the post, it was with a vague restlessness of hope that it would bring something even more interesting than what for so many months had daily placed *his* name before her in the deathless characters of fame.

At length, a speck in the distance caught her eager eye—again—no, she could not be mistaken, this was no single horseman that appeared in the distance, but a travelling-carriage and four. For once—

"Their speed kept pace with her expectancy,
And flew——"

Who could it be at this early hour of the day? It was impossible to be any morning visitors. An unusual glow suffused her cheek as the well-remembered colour of the carriage became apparent, and, as she watched its approach through the massive iron-gates which immediately preceded the drive up to the door, an earl's coronet spoke sufficiently plainly to her heart of whose it was.

She trembled too much to retain her place at the window to see who was within; but, as she threw herself into an arm-chair, she inwardly ejaculated—

"Oh God, teach me to bear happiness as thou hast done sorrow!"

In another moment, the rapid pull-up of the excited horses was heard at the door—the quick letting down of the steps of the carriage rang in her ear, and, before there

seemed time for her servants to have answered the eager ring of the bell, the tread of a never-to-be-forgotten footstep was heard upon the stairs, the folding doors were opened, and Lord Desmond was announced.

She rose from her chair with the bright hue of happiness on her cheek, the sparkling glow of delighted hope in her eye. One look was sufficient for these once estranged hearts—each felt the truth of the other—and "My Clara, love more," was all that passed Lord Desmond's lips, as he clasped his long-loved and only-loved to his heart.

CHAPTER XV.

"Lampeggiar del angelico riso."

PETRACA.

"Alfin giungesti
A consolar, Lodice, un fido amante
Oh quante volte, oh quante.
Ei sospirò per te!"

SIROE—ALTO PRIMO.

"But such a sacred and homefelt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never felt till now."

COMUS

WHEN the great gong of the feudal times which at Eastham Court had not been replaced by the bell of more modern days, told the hour of luncheon had arrived, both Clara and Lord Desmond started at the

rapidity with which the morning had fled away.

It were vain to attempt a description of those blissful hours—hours filled up with fond recollections and yet fonder anticipations—when the heart of each seemed to rest in "the sober certainty of waking bliss."

Lord Desmond had arranged to be absent from his parliamentary duties for two nights, and being able to avail himself of the rapidity of rail-road travelling for the greater part of the journey, he had another day yet to spend in happy association with her who bounded every wish of his heart.

Clara proposed to order her carriage and drive over to the Rectory, in order to bring back Mr. and Mrs. Bouverie with them, that the good people of Kingsland might not be scandalized with the lovers indulging in a *tête a tête* of any lengthened duration, but the day was so luxuriantly balmy for the time of the

year, such a freshness breathed on all around, that they mutually agreed a walk would be far preferable to the constraint of a carriage, which should only follow to bring them back with Mrs. Bouverie.

In a few minutes, Clara was equipped for her expedition, not waiting to hear Janet's exclamations of delight at seeing her dear lady look quite like her own self once more. With a throbbing heart, but no longer the suppressed emotion of a feeling she must not indulge, did she place her hand in Lord Desmond's arm, and with all the bounding elasticity of youthful spirits commence their country walk through shady lanes and fields to the rectory of Greenwood.

As they approached the house, Mr. and Mrs. Bouverie were just standing in the little gothic porch, waiting for their eldest girl to join them in a walk, and it would be difficult to express the surprise depicted on their countenances at the sight of Clara

and her companion. Emma Bouverie, with the quick tact of woman, immediately guessed the truth, which probably she had previously suspected, but which now to her penetrating eyes, was clearly read in Clara's radiant smile.

Mr. Bouverie, slower of comprehension in such matters, frankly expressed his pleasurable surprise. "But, my dear Lord," he added, as he shook Lord Desmond cordially by the hand, "I little thought of where your steps where bending, when I read in this morning's paper that you had left London on some important private business."

"And for once, my dear sir," the papers have spoken the truth," replied the smiling Earl: "the most important business of my life has brought me here, and, thanks to this fair lady," as he glanced at his blushing companion, "blessed with the happiest conclusion. I may now claim your congratulations on being the most fortunate of men

When the real state of the case was no longer to be misconceived, Mr. Bouverie could not suppress a quiet joke at Clara for the cunning manner in which she had deceived him into the idea of her political zeal, from the warm interest she betrayed in the debates of the House of Lords, and when he had given her credit for extraordinary patience in listening to a second reading of one of Lord Desmond's longest speeches—

"Ah," he added, laughing, "I knew before, that—

"Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,"

but I had yet to learn that it swayed the senate, also. Love of your country, and devotion to her interests seemed so completely the ruling passion of your heart, I had certainly no idea, my lord, there was room for the admission of any softer sentiment."

For an instant, the open, manly brow of

the statesman was overcast, but the sunny expression of younger days chased away the cloud, and pressing the little hand which yet rested on his own, he turned, with his own peculiar gracefulness of manner, to Mr. Bouverie, saying,

"I owe it to this object of my earliest love to tell you frankly, my dear sir, that in this you have totally mistaken my character. My first hopes were blighted, I need not explain to you how, but my nature demanded something more than the tame common-place of every-day life, and I sought an object for the energies of my mind in taking up the cause of my injured country. But now that I find my own hopes restored, I blush to think that my zeal and patriotism may grow cold."

"Oh no; never, never, dear William, depend upon it," said Clara, with all the fond trust of former days, "you will never desert this noble cause. Your wife," and she

blushed brighter as she spoke, "shall never make you desert your country; she shall the rather inspirit you on the bright path you are pursuing; though not such a determined politician as Mr. Bouverie once thought me, I still can bid you go on:—

> "Go then to fight, Clara bids thee go,
> Clara can a *statesman's* feelings know,
> And weep a *statesman's* shame."

"Bravo, bravo, my fair enthusiast!" said Mr. Bouverie, who saw Lord Desmond's heart was too full to command words, "with these sentiments to urge him on, we shall find no recreant in the glorious path his Lordship has chosen. But let us descend to every-day subjects now, and come in and rest yourselves after your long walk."

The point of returning to Eastham Court as a sanction to its fair mistress for receiving such a guest was speedily arranged, and an evening of the most unmingled friendly intercourse closed this happy day. Lord

Desmond's hopes and plans for the future were openly discussed before their mutual friends, with whom Clara felt no necessity for reserve, and her heart was too openly generous to wish to disguise her present engagement, or that it was a renewal of former ties, which an imperious necessity had alone ever broken. Lord Desmond informed them that he had seen the Earl and Countess of St. Clair previously to his leaving London, and, on the event of a happy issue to his journey, they had invited him to spend as much of the approaching recess with them at St. Clair Park as could be spared from his Irish estates.

To this Clara now added the hope, that his little girl would be her inmate, which he was only too happy to comply with, assured as he was of her affectionate love for her now adopted brother; and that in this union so necessary to the joy of his own life, he had also best consulted the future prospects of his child.

The following week, Parliament was to be adjourned, and Lord Desmond would now only leave his betrothed to return in a few short days with his friends into her immediate neighbourhood in the proud character of her accepted lover, to him how much dearer than all the public fame he had acquired! It sometimes seemed as if his present happiness was too great to be real, as if it were but a blissful dream from which he should wake to the stern realities of a cheerless existence on the morrow, and he hung on the beloved tones of Clara's voice as if then only daring to trust his felicity.

It were vain to attempt a sketch of the joyful autumn, stretching far into the winter which followed this eventful day. Lady Eastham had her friends, Captain and Lady Georgiana Macdonald, accompanied by her sister staying at Eastham Court, and the constant association thus continued with Cecil Aston rivetted the chains which this

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

"the heart
It was her choice to share;
His heart dwelt with her as a thought
With which no earthly wishes were."

Lady Eastham firmly refused the solicitations of her friends to spend the remainder of the winter in London, where Parliamentary duties called her relatives from St. Clair Park, and, consequently, Lord Desmond with them, for she thought it due to the respectful memory of the departed to let more than the prescribed time of mourning elapse ere she again emerged into scenes of gaiety. But true to the native ingenuousness of her heart, she made no frivolous scruples in frequently receiving her affianced lord as a guest for a few days, or a few hours even, when that was all he could snatch from his public engagements, and when she was always sure of the ready sanction of Mr. and Mrs. Bouverie's presence for his visits.

Thus interspersed with bright snatches

[illegible]

CHAPTER XVI.

"First, lusty spring, all dight in leaves of flowers,
That freshly budded and new bloosmes did beare,
In which a thousand birds had built their bowers
That sweetly sang to call forth paramours;
And in his hand a javelin he did beare,
And on his head (as fit for warlike stoures),
A gilt engraven mirror he did weare;
That as some did him love, so others did him feare."

SPENCER.

ONE of the most pure-minded and imaginative of our modern poets, the amiable and lamented Mrs. Hemans, speaks of spring as a season of mournfulness rather than of hope, as telling of the dead, rather than pointing to the living. "I cannot but feel

every year, with the return of the violet, how much the shadows of my mind have deepened since its last appearance; and to me the spring, with all its joy and beauty, is generally a time of thoughtfulness rather than of mirth. With the bright sunshine laughing around, it seems more sad to think of; yet if I could choose when I would wish to die, it would be in spring—the influence of that season is so strangely depressing to my heart and frame."

There is doubtless much that is beautiful and poetical in these ideas, but they are those of a mind subdued by sorrow, and whose natural joyousness of tone has withered beneath the touch of disappointment. It may be doubted if they would have been written by this talented anthoress in the first freshness of her youth, and before the bright visions of that sunny season, had faded before the stern realities of her maturer life. They cannot, therefore, be considered as the

natural feeling of a sensitive mind, but an after temperament brought on by melancholy and peculiar circumstances.

There is something so purely exhilarating to the happy and hopeful heart in the sweet odours and opening flowers of spring, that we would fain shield its brightness from the imputation of gloom, and explain away an authority which some morbid temperaments might else gladly seize on as an excuse for their own cherished despondency.

There was none of this to check the glowing enjoyment of Clara's heart, as she watched the first tinge of green spreading over her luxuriant woods, and listened to the joyous notes of the birds, telling that the chill of winter was past, and that sunshine and flowers were before them. So, also, a new and bright existence seemed opening before her, and she hailed the gladness of external nature as a type and similitude of her own sunny prospects.

It had been arranged that her wedding was to take place at St. George's, Hanover Square, and the ceremony to be performed by Mr. Bouverie. The station of each of the parties was too decidedly acknowledged in the fashionable world to make any eclât necessary, and the feelings of each prompted to as unceremonious and unostentatious a party as was at all consistent with their position in society; and it is universally acknowledged that no where can a wedding be got through so quietly as in London.

Clara was to join her uncle and aunt in Grosvenor-square only the week previously to her marriage; and, before leaving the country, she went to gratify the affectionate heart of the old gardener at St. Clair Park, by requesting he would send up large baskets of flowers for the approaching ceremony, and that especially she might receive a white moss-rose from the same stock from which he had given one to her beloved mother.

The old man laid his hand on her head in a parting benediction, and as the tears of affection rolled down his furrowed cheeks, he earnestly besought the God of her fathers to bless her in all her ways.

"Yes, dear lady," he fervently added, in that poetical language, which we have already seen his life spent among flowers and the sweet works of nature seemed to have inspired.

"Yes, dear lady, and something tells me that you will be happy; that all the good and the hidden charity which you have exercised for the happiness of others shall now be rewarded ten-fold on your own heart. There is a bright radiance in your eye, like one of my fresh young rosebuds, which promises a joyful future. I am an old man, my lady, but I can see more than is thought for into the hearts of the young, and I never before thought you looked as joyous like as you ought to do. But now it is quite different,

and you have the same bright, sunny smile the Lady Adelaide had, the day she talked to me before her marriage with your noble father,—for a noble gentleman he was, in mind and soul, though maybe not so rich as some others. But, God bless you, my dear lady, when you see all my sweet flowers blooming around you, then be sure the prayers of an old man are ascending to heaven for you and my lord. I can't hope to pick flowers for your children's wedding, but maybe I may gather them for their christening."

When Clara arrived in Grosvenor-square, she found the same rooms prepared for her which had been hers on her first arrival there from Scotland, an orphan girl, seeking the protection so affectionately bestowed, when she came with a bleeding heart, determined to bury in its inmost recesses the memory of hopes which appeared for ever blighted. Now she came, all radiant with

assured prospects of happiness, already abounding in all the world could give, and anticipating the yet dearer riches of tried and faithful love.

As she threw herself into Lady St. Clair's arms, as she entered her well-remembered rooms, she joyously exclaimed,—

"Ah! dearest Contessa, what a different being am I now, to when on this very chair, and you reclining on that sofa, I confided to your affection the history of my early love. How little did I then think I should ever meet him again, and all that woman's heart could desire of great and noble. Yes, indeed, I shall be justly proud to share the honours of a name which is now so heightened with his country's love, and interwoven with the laurels of a statesman's fame."

"Well, dearest, I will not quarrel with your heroics," said the smiling Countess, when you discuss them with such glowing cheeks. Why surely you have found some

fairy well to sprinkle you over with its wondrous water, and then come forth in renovated youth and beauty. I must say you were always very handsome, but now you far surpass yourself, and I augur that the admired Lady Eastham will speedily be forgotten in the resplendent Countess of Desmond. But you must not be jealous of your lord, for I can tell you he has improved as much in looks as you have; instead of the grave, reserved statesman, apparently absorbed in politics, he is quite the gay man of fashion, and all the young ladies were dying of admiration "pour ses beaux yeux," when they heard the prize was already won. It was well you were safe ensconced in the country, or there is no telling what envious designs might have been levelled against your life.

"But tell me, how have you left all our charming Kingsland friends? I hope you made 'the amiable,' and paid your parting

compliments before you left the nieghbourhood; the Miss Quirks would never forgive such an omission, and we may have another election some time; at all events, it is always best to avoid making enemies. By the-bye, talking of enemies reminds me that I fear I have irremediably offended our august duchess by continuing to spend a quiet morning occasionally with poor Theresa. You know the bitterness of that family's enmity when provoked, and they are now leaving no stone unturned to prevent her re-admission into society. I must confess I feel it a delicate matter to act in, for it is against my often declared principles to visit a divorcée; and yet in this case there are so many extenuating circumstances, it seems cruel to keep up one's determination. At present, I have steered a medium course, and avoiding asking her to my public parties, still receive her when we are alone, and spend many a summer

morning very agreeably with them in the splendid solitude of their Richmond villa, which is one of the largest mansions among that constellation of beautiful abodes, and their whole establishment is in keeping. Ernest Cavendish sometimes drives his poor little wife in the park, with four splendid greys in a most elegant bijou of a carriage, built from his own invention. But he is oftener seen riding himself, followed by two grooms, and talking nonsense as usual to all the handsome women of a certain rank, who will accept his attentions."

"And do you, Contessa, now still come in for your share, or more than your share?" asked Clara, with an arch smile. "Time was when I feared for you in that quarter, but the spell was broken, if it ever existed more than in my apprehension, before his affair with Theresa. The first spare morning, we must drive down and see her. I should like to ask her to be present at our

wedding, and as none but our particular friends will be present, and who know the peculiar circumstances of her case, perhaps the thing might be managed without giving annoyance to any one, and conferring a great pleasure on one whose pleasures I fear are few. I will ask William his opinion, and perhaps you will be so good as to consult my uncle, whose advice on such matters, and indeed in all, may well be relied on. William tells me it is delightful to see how really reverenced he is by all parties, and how completely he comes up to the idea of a real English nobleman of the good old school."

"Yes, dear Clara, you do him but justice," said the beautiful Countess, "there might have been a time in my married life when I secretly, even secretly to my own heart, for I was always ashamed of such a feeling, regretted the disparity in our years, and thought I might have been happier with one

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ceive him yourself in the drawing-room. I will join you presently, and hear if you still continue the plan of spending your honey-moon at your Irish castle."

CHAPTER XVII.

"Time and tide had thus their sway,
Yielding, like an April day,
Smiling noon for sullen morrow
Years of joy for days of sorrow!"

ROKEBY.

"Why then a final note prolong,
Or lengthen out a closing song?"

MARMION.

From the Countess of Desmond to the Lady Katherine Arundel.

"Desmond Castle, May 30, 18**.

"YOUR kind affection, my valued and beloved friend, claims my earliest notice since my marriage, and, as I enjoy my present happiness I cannot but remember how

deep a debt of gratitude I owe to your invaluable precepts. It is among my warmest prayers that they may never be forgotten, and that surrounded with all that can render life valuable, I may still hold fast those heavenly principles which you taught me would alike support the soul in sorrow, and sanctify and purify its enjoyments.

"I wish it were possible to transport you here, if only for a few hours, to see the blissful tenour of our life, and while happy ourselves, adding, I hope, to the comfort of those around us. You know how ardently my husband has long been struggling for the public welfare of his country, but his wishes do not stop there; he is anxious to promote the private happiness of all those who are dependent upon him on the large, and in some places wild, extent of country which forms his ancestral domain round the castle.

"You can imagine how delightful it is to me to witness the almost adoration with which he is regarded on all parts of his estate, and, as belonging to him, these warm-hearted people have already transferred a portion of their love to me. Our little Mary, who came with us, runs a chance of being devoured with their devoted attachment, and the faithful Irish nurse, who has always been her careful attendant, seems perfectly in her element, and to be enjoying a kind of paradise on earth. She has taught the little girl some Irish phrases, and it is amusing to see the delight of the people, when they hear her answer them in their own language.

"Arrah, and good luck to you, then; and the chief does not think it beneath him to be letting his own flesh and blood, the Mavourneen, speak her native tongue, he does not; and may the jewil of the world be blessed for it for ever and ever, that may she!"

"You remember my affectionate Scotch maid, Janet; she appears almost bewildered with the attention she receives as a part and parcel of the family; and declares that, next to the Scotch, the Irish are surely the best people, and the 'highest minded' in the world.

"I find the Castle a delightful residence, much more habitable than I had expected; we have contrived to make a few rooms thoroughly comfortable; and before we leave we shall have some upholsterers in from Dublin, and give directions to have it completely furnished against we go back in the autumn, when we shall be able to return the hospitalities which our neighbours are pouring upon us now.

"I scarcely know how we shall find time for all the delightful projects we have in view; and among the dearest is a flight to see you, my best of friends. I know full well how it will gladden your generous heart

to see your adopted daughter so perfectly happy, and I long to introduce a congenial mind to your own, whose name I am justly proud to bear.

"You have long admired his public character, and I can only assure you his private one fully equals it; but on this subject I must not trust my pen; and perhaps you may think a wife of scarcely a month's standing is not the most impartial judge in the world.

"I hope you have received for my kind and dear sisters of St. Madeleine the wedding-cake which I desired Gunter might send of the largest possible dimensions, and I am sure it will remind them to offer up their prayers for the earthly, as well as eternal, happiness of her who spent so many profitable days in their peaceful community, and there imbibed those ennobling principles which she hopes will guide her through all the varied scenes of life.

"Our wedding was as private as the attendance of our numerous friends would admit of, and among this number was the worthy vicar and his wife, from my old Scotch home. You can imagine how my heart warmed to these earliest friends of my childhood, and as William had been his pupil, there was a double motive for inviting them. It seemed quite to bring our young days back again, the seeing these old familiar faces, and we promised them a visit in Scotland, and ourselves the delight of retracing former scenes together, as soon as we can contrive to be absent from London again, where we must return at the end of next month.

"Poor Theresa was also present at our wedding, but, though she was gratified by being invited, I could not but perceive a strong tinge of melancholy over her manners and countenance. I fear this displeases her husband. But how can it be otherwise? Then

especially she must have contrasted the gloomy and unpropitious circumstances of her own marriage, in the ruined chapel of Rusillon with the happy faces and congratulating friends which it was my happier fortune to see around me.

My dear uncle seemed cordially to rejoice as he placed my hand in Lord Desmond's, and to feel a pride in receiving such a man for his nephew. My beautiful aunt was all smiles—my kind friends Lady Georgiana Macdonald and her sister were near me with affectionate looks of love, and I must not forget to include the amiable Mrs. Bouverie, whose presence has supported me in many a trying hour, and was always ready with her sympathy of either tears, or smiles. Thank God, the latter now seems to preponderate in my lot, and perhaps few more cheerful scenes could be witnessed than our wedding party, which is generally apt to be rather a melancholy affair. But certainly

mine was under peculiar circumstances. There was no breaking up of early ties, no leaving a parental home to be thrown on a comparatively untried tenderness—none of these mixed feelings were mine—my marriage only drew closer those bonds of affectionate friendship which I feel will bless me through life, and gave me to the long known love of him who first awakened the sentiment in my youthful heart. You cannot then wonder that no tears were shed at this consummation of our happiness, and that if my lips faltered in pronouncing the irrevocable vows, it was from emotions of overflowing happiness, and not from doubt or misgiving.

"In our friendly intercourse at St. Madeleine, I gave too complete a catalogue *raisonnée* of my chosen friends, for the name of Cecil Aston being omitted, and I rejoice to tell you that all my wishes for his happiness will soon be accomplished in his union

with Lady Charlotte Selby. I have long seen this attachment growing in the hearts of each, and the united influence of my uncle and husband has succeeded in procuring him a very lucrative and honourable place in one of the government offices, and for which his talents and firm adherence to liberal principles peculiarly fit him.

"Thus, all Lord Stoneleigh's objections to the match have vanished, as there is little doubt that Cecil Aston will rise to the highest eminence in the state, and even his present position, joined to the ancient and time-honoured name he bears, entitles him to sue for the hand of any fair lady in the land.

"The only disagreeable feeling I have experienced in Ireland has been the falling in with the odious Lady Lancaster, and her self-sufficient daughters. You remember how cruelly they behaved to poor Theresa in an accidental meeting at Naples, and outraged every feeling of feminine gentleness

in the marked rudeness of their behaviour, and will not therefore wonder that I avoid their society as much as possible, though they are constantly pestering me with their urgent endeavours at intimacy. They are on a visit in this neighbourhood, and, I rather imagine, had boasted of the friendly terms of their acquaintance with me, which really had never proceeded beyond the most formal bounds of speaking when we accidentally met; but this, in the country, was hoped to be patched up into a great deal more.

"If there was not much that is very good and very amiable in the world, really such characters as these would disgust me with society; but I always find it an invariable rule, that those who are most eager to trample on others who, by situation or birth, they fancy at all beneath them, are also the first to offer the most servile and degrading flattery to those they consider in

a higher or more honourable station than themselves.

"I must not close my letter, dearest Lady Katherine, without offering my humble meed of praise to your persecuted fellow religionists in Ireland. I am happy to say we have a liberal-minded and Christian-hearted clergyman in our parish, who, instead of making the name of Protestant odious, by the narrowness and want of charity in his own views, can offer the hand of Christian fellowship to any worthy member of Christ's flock, without asking what may be his especial opinion on some doctrinal points. He goes on the broad, the *Bible* principle, that 'all who believe in the Son of God shall be saved.' And thus our little domain, instead of being a scene of jealousy and dispute, is perfectly peaceful and harmonious.

"The Catholic priest sees no symptoms of hostility, and cordially joins in every

plan which is proposed for the comfort and advantage of the surrounding population. I need not tell you that my husband earnestly co-operates in this fostering of unity. He has for several years established a large school, entirely at his own expense, where the children of Catholic and Protestant sit side by side, and learn out of one primer—the clergyman and the Catholic priest alike attending on different days to superintend the general business of the school, and to give religious instruction to those of their respective creeds.

"If this system were more generally adopted, and the Protestant landholders would refrain from all demonstrations of party and religious bigotry in the distribution of their charities, there is every reason to anticipate the happiest results, and that Ireland generally would become as peaceful, as well instructed, and, consequently, as happy, as the part round our immediate neighbourhood.

"I assure you, dear friend, that I will not fail in complying with your kind wish of frequently informing you of my proceedings, and, though the path of our duties is widely apart, still I hope never to forget the lesson taught by your inestimable precepts and bright example, that there is no sphere of life, however different in other things, in which the main object in view ought not to be the same, 'the seeking the glory of God, and performing his will on earth.' Join your prayers to mine, best of friends, that I may never lose sight of this ennobling motive for action through all my future life; and, with heartfelt gratitude for all your kindness, believe me,

"Always your truly affectionate,
"and now very, very happy,
"CLARA DESMOND."

THE END.

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